

## Ihotaudit

### Patient instructions, Azathioprine

Trade names: Imurel®, Azamun®, Azathioprin®

#### Indications and mode of action

Azathioprine is an immunosuppressive medication, which means that it calms down the immune system. Azathioprine is used to treat several inflammatory skin conditions.

#### Dosage

The dosage of azathioprine varies individually and depends on the response. The response will be seen only 2 to 4 months after starting therapy. Take the medicine with meal and water.

#### Adverse effects

The most common adverse effects of azathioprine include nausea and stomach ache, which often occur in the beginning of the therapy. Azathioprine affects the bone marrow function and may cause changes in the number of blood cells. In rare occasions, azathioprine may affect the liver or pancreas functions. Azathioprine may increase the likeliness of infections, and you should not hesitate to see a doctor if you experience symptoms of an infection. In cases of serious infections, it is often best to hold azathioprine for a while.

#### Interactions with other medications

Azathioprine interacts with allopurinol, which is a medicine for gout. If you are taking allopurinol (Allonol®, Allopurinol Accord®, Apurin Sandoz®, Zyrolic®), let your attending physician know.

#### Vaccinations

During azathioprine therapy, you should not take vaccines containing live attenuated vaccines, such as MPR, chicken box and yellow fever vaccines. Inactivated vaccines such as the influenza vaccine can be taken during azathioprine therapy, but the response may be poorer than normal.

#### Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Azathioprine is not recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. We recommend using reliable contraception during the therapy. A condom is not enough. Discuss your medication with your physician before planning to get pregnant.

## **Follow-ups**

Azathioprine therapy requires regular blood tests. Your blood count and liver function levels need to be checked during the therapy. Laboratory tests will be taken in the beginning of the therapy and when the dosage is increased every two weeks for a month, after which the testing can be reduced to take place only every three months.

Your physician will contact you only if there is something abnormal in the test results.

For the treatment to be safe, it is absolutely necessary that you have the laboratory tests taken. If you cannot attend the planned tests, it is not safe to continue the treatment and it may have to be discontinued.

We will schedule the follow-up tests at your appointment at the Skin and Allergy Hospital, and the tests will be taken at a HUSLAB laboratory. You can eat and drink as usual before the blood tests.

Book an appointment for lab tests online at [www.huslab.fi](http://www.huslab.fi)

*Potilasohje | Hyväksytty: 12.1.2022*