



INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE CLINIC

Thiopurine Immunomodulators

· Azathioprine (Imuran®) · 6-Mercaptopurine (Purinethol®) ·

Thiopurine immunomodulators modify the immune system, thereby suppressing the body's immune response which is thought to be overactive in inflammatory bowel disease. These drugs are used to maintain remission in moderate-to-severe IBD. They are often started with a tapering course of corticosteroids to induce remission during an acute IBD flare. They may also be prescribed to prevent antibody formation associated with the use of biological therapy.

Blood Work:

- You are required to complete **scheduled blood work every week for four (4) weeks after starting azathioprine (Imuran®) or 6-MP (Purinethol®), and then every month for the entire time you are taking the medication**, unless instructed differently. You should be provided with a standing orders blood work requisition for the laboratory.
- After completing your **Week 2 scheduled blood work**, you are required to contact your physician, nurse practitioner, or clinic nurse. This is done to determine if you are tolerating the medication and to decide if your dose of azathioprine (Imuran®) or 6-mercaptopurine (Purinethol®) should be increased.
- After completing your **Week 4 scheduled blood work**, you are required to contact your physician, nurse practitioner, or clinic nurse. This is done to confirm you are tolerating the medication.

Scheduled Dates for Required Blood Work:	
Week 1:	_____
Week 2:	_____ - contact health care provider to review results
Week 3:	_____
Week 4:	_____ - contact health care provider to review results
Continue with monthly blood work if medication is tolerated	

Patients living in Calgary and surrounding area are recommended to book this appointment in advance by using the on-line patient appointment booking service at www.calgarylabservices.com. Patients living outside Calgary should contact their local lab directly about appointment bookings.

Symptoms to Report:

- You should **stop this medication and contact your physician, nurse practitioner, or nurse immediately if you have symptoms** of severe nausea (with or without vomiting), fever, rash or other skin reaction such as blistering or peeling, unusual bleeding or bruising, joint pain, malaise, muscle aching, kidney problems, feeling faint especially when standing up, difficulty breathing, and/or diarrhea that has increased since starting the medication, as this may indicate as this may indicate hypersensitivity, intolerance, or allergy to this medication. **If your symptoms are severe or worsening, you should go immediately to the nearest emergency department or activate your emergency response system.**
- You must **stop this medication and go to the nearest emergency department if you develop** sudden and severe abdominal pain (with or without vomiting and fever), as this medication can rarely cause pancreatitis.

Prevention of Adverse Events and Management of Side Effects:

- You need to contact your physician, nurse practitioner, or nurse if you are started on allopurinol (Zyloprim®), a medication commonly prescribed for gout, as your dose of azathioprine (Imuran®) or 6-mercaptopurine (Purinethol®) will need to be adjusted in order to prevent serious complications.
- You need to contact your physician, nurse practitioner, or nurse if you are started on angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (mainly prescribed for the treatment of high blood pressure or heart failure); co-trimoxazole (Septra®), an antibiotic prescribed for the treatment of infections); warfarin (a blood thinner prescribed for the prevention of blood clots); OR mesalazine, mesalamine, olsalazine or sulphasalazine (aminosalicylates prescribed for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease). Azathioprine (Imuran®) and 6-mercaptopurine (Purinethol®) can interact with these other medications and your thiopurine immunomodulator may need to be adjusted in order to prevent serious complications.
- Do not use Echinacea or cat's claw (herbal remedies) when taking this medication.
- Take this medication at bedtime, after meals, or in divided doses if it makes you feel nauseated. You can also try frequent mouth care (like brushing your teeth or rinsing with mouth wash), sucking on hard sugar-free candies, or consuming small frequent meals. Contact your physician, nurse clinician, or nurse if your nausea does not improve.