

# PHARMACY

Drug Information

## Mercaptopurine Tablet



### What is Mercaptopurine?

- Mercaptopurine is used for the treatment of acute myeloid leukemia (AML), acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML).

### How is Mercaptopurine Administered / Taken?

- Mercaptopurine is taken orally once daily, on an empty stomach. Try not to touch the medicine with your bare hands; use the medicine cup provided to take your medicine. Do not take milk or milk-based products with Mercaptopurine. Take food or milk/milk based products one hour before or 3 hours after Mercaptopurine.
- Swallow them whole with a glass of water. Do not chew or crush the medicines. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- If you miss a dose of Mercaptopurine, take it as soon as you possible if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

### Can Mercaptopurine be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including supplements, traditional or herbal remedies.

### What are the Important Side Effects of Mercaptopurine?

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Mouth ulcers can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat and this can lead to an infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight.</li> <li>• Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.</li> </ul>
Risk of infection may be increased as Mercaptopurine can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Wash your hands after using the toilet.</li> <li>-Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>-Do not share food and avoid taking raw food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if you experience signs of an infection such as fever with a temperature above 38°C, chills, and burning sensation when passing urine.</li> <li>• Do not take Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever unless instructed by your doctor/ nurse.</li> </ul>
Fatigue or tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. Inform your doctor if fatigue is persistent or worsens.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Mercaptopurine can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself.</li> <li>-Clean your nose by blowing gently; Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>-Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily.</li> <li>-Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if you experience signs of bleeding such as blood in urine or stools, or easy bruising.</li> </ul>
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your doctor may prescribe medicines to control diarrhoea. Inform your doctor if it is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use.</li> <li>• Make sure you drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea.</li> <li>• Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.</li> </ul>

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

## Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.
- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Mercaptopurine and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Mercaptopurine may have an anti-fertility effect, which could be irreversible. You should discuss with your doctor regarding fertility preservation prior to starting treatment.
- You should not breast-feed during treatment.

## What Else can I do to Help My Condition?

- Exercise

Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Do avoid strenuous exercise, and rest when you are feeling tired.

- Stay positive

Understand your condition and take an active role in managing it. Do not be afraid to talk about it with your doctor/ pharmacist/ family members. Repressed feelings can be harmful to your immediate well-being and long-term health.

- Adequate hydration

Maintain adequate hydration with 2 to 3 litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of being constipated and also prevent dehydration.

- Medical and dental treatment

If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always inform the doctors and nurses that you are having chemotherapy. Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment. Always inform your dentist that you are having chemotherapy.

## How do I Store Mercaptopurine?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>

