

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Allopurinol



What Is Allopurinol?

- Allopurinol is a tablet medication that reduces the level of uric acid (body's waste product) in the blood. High levels of uric acid in the blood can cause pain and swelling in the joints (known as gout attack).
- Allopurinol is useful in the long-term treatment and prevention of gout. However, it does not treat an acute (short-term) attack of gout or cure gout.
- Allopurinol may also be used to prevent high uric acid levels in the blood during chemotherapy.

How Is Allopurinol Taken?

- The Allopurinol tablet is taken through the mouth, with or after food to reduce chances of stomach upset.
- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Do not double the dosage to make up for the missed dose.

How Long Does It Take for Allopurinol to Be Effective?

- Allopurinol takes time to work. It is important that you take your medication regularly to benefit from it.
- For gout treatment, Allopurinol is usually started at a low dose. Depending on your response to the medication and the level of uric acid in your blood, dosage may be slowly increased. This will help you to get used to the medication and for side effects to be monitored.
- During the first few months after starting Allopurinol, you may experience more gout attacks. However, taking Allopurinol regularly will reduce the number of gout attacks and make them less painful.
- In the long run, Allopurinol can prevent gout attacks and reduce uric acid crystals (tophi) that you may have.

Can Allopurinol Be Taken with Other Medications?

- Allopurinol can be taken together with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and other gout medications (e.g. Colchicine).
- Allopurinol should not be taken with Azathioprine (a medication that keeps your immune system in check) as it may affect the removal of Azathioprine from the body, hence increasing both its immunosuppressive effects and side effects.
- Please inform your doctor, pharmacist or rheumatology nurse clinician if you are taking other medications as they may affect how Allopurinol works. These include over-the-counter medications, supplements and traditional/herbal remedies.

Should I Continue or Stop Allopurinol During an Acute Attack of Gout?

- If you are already taking Allopurinol, continue taking it together with other medications prescribed for the acute gout attack.

What Dietary Changes Should I Make?

- Drink at least 2 litres (about 8 glasses) of water daily to help your kidneys remove the uric acid (or as advised by your doctor). Drinking enough water is important, especially if you have kidney stones. This may lower the uric acid level in your body and prevent new kidney stones from forming.
- Avoid alcohol intake as it may increase the uric acid level in your blood, triggering new gout attacks.
- Reduce intake of food and beverages with high sugar (fructose) content (e.g. soft drinks) and food that is high in purine content (e.g. organ meats).

What Are the Important Side Effects of Allopurinol?

- Allopurinol is generally well-tolerated, but some side effects may occur only after months or years of taking Allopurinol. Always discuss with your doctor if you experience any side effects.

Side Effect	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea • Vomiting • Loss of appetite • Diarrhoea 	<p>Take the medication after food or divide the dose to be taken throughout the day to reduce side effects.</p> <p>Inform your doctor if symptoms are severe or if you experience loss of appetite.</p>
<p>Blood disorder (rare)</p> <p><u>Warning Signs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual bleeding or bruising • Lip or mouth ulcers with "flu-like" symptoms 	<p>Consult your doctor immediately.</p> <p>It is important to note the effects of your new treatment, particularly during the first three months.</p> <p>For your safety, you need to do regular blood tests to make sure there are no issues.</p>
<p>Skin reactions (rare but severe side effect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually occur within the first seven to 21 days of treatment, but may only show up two years after starting treatment <p><u>Warning Signs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hives • Skin rashes • Itching or burning • Peeling of skin • Hair loss <p>Note: Skin reactions may be followed by severe hypersensitivity reactions, with symptoms such as:</p>	<p>Stop the medication and consult your doctor immediately.</p> <p>If your initial rash was mild, your doctor may give you Allopurinol at a lower dose.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Chills• Nausea or vomiting• Muscle ache• Sore throat• Swelling of eyes or lips• Hepatitis• Jaundice	
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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?

- Do inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.

How Do I Store Allopurinol?

- Allopurinol should be stored in the original packaging and protected from light. Store it in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

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

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

