

Walker Veterinary Hospital

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AZATHIOPRINE

Why has my veterinarian prescribed this medicine?

Azathioprine is used to suppress the immune system. It is used to treat diseases and disorders caused by an overactive immune system. Examples of conditions the medication may be used for include: immune mediated skin disease, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, rheumatoid arthritis, polyarthritis, polymyositis, eosinophilic enteritis, myasthenia gravis, atrophic gastritis, ulcerative colitis, systemic lupus erythematosus, ocular histiocytoma, and chronic active hepatitis. When taking this medication, your pet may become more susceptible to infections. If you can, keep your pet away from other animals with infections.

How do I give this medication?

- Wear gloves while handling this medication and wash your hands afterwards.
- Give this medication to your pet as directed by your veterinarian. **READ THE LABEL CAREFULLY.**
- This medication may be given with food.
- If the medicine is a liquid, measure the dose with reasonable care.
- Try to give this medication at about the same time(s) each day.
- **DO NOT** give the pet more medicine than directed.
- **DO NOT** give the medicine more often than directed.
- **DO NOT** stop giving this medication unless directed by your veterinarian.
- Try not to miss giving any doses.
- It is recommended that you wash your hands after administering this medication.



What do I do if I miss giving a dose?

Give the dose as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose, and continue with the regular schedule. Do not give the pet two doses at once.

How do I store this medicine?

- Keep this medicine out of reach of children and other pets.
- Store this medicine in a cool, dry place at room temperature. Store away from heat and direct sunlight.
- Do not store this medicine in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in damp places. The medicine may break down if exposed to heat or moisture.

What are some potential side effects?

- Your veterinarian will likely monitor your pet's blood levels regularly to check for leukopenia (low white blood cell counts), anemia or thrombocytopenia (low platelet counts).
- Your pet may experience some stomach upset, such as diarrhea, vomiting and lack of appetite. If these symptoms persist, contact your veterinarian.
- If you notice any unusual bleeding, blood in the urine or stool, loss of appetite, infection or red spots on the skin, contact your veterinarian immediately.
- Other side effects may occur. If you notice anything unusual, contact your veterinarian.

Are there any possible drug interactions?

- Make sure to tell your veterinarian what other medication you are giving your pet.
- Quite often your veterinarian may prescribe two different medications, even if a drug interaction may occur. In this case, your veterinarian may vary the dose and/or monitor your pet more closely.
- The following drugs can potentially interact with azathioprine: succinylcholine, pancuronium, tubocurarine, and allopurinol.
- Contact your veterinarian if your pet experiences any unusual reactions when different medications are given together.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by Rita Ozolins, B.Sc., Phm.
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