

# ANTI-TNF THERAPY

## Patient Checklist

Please could you share this checklist with your GP and ensure that all steps have been taken to keep you safe.

**AZATHIOPRINE AND MERCAPTOPYRINE BELONG TO A CLASS OF MEDICATIONS CALLED THIOPURINES. THEY ARE IMMUNOSUPPRESSIVE DRUGS THAT ARE USED TO TREAT INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD), BOTH CROHN'S DISEASE AND ULCERATIVE COLITIS.**

In people with IBD as well as other autoimmune conditions, the immune system attacks the body's own tissues. These drugs work by suppressing the body's immune system, thereby reducing inflammation and tissue damage.

This checklist is designed to help reduce risks associated with Azathioprine and Mercaptopurine therapy.

For further information, please refer to our **Medication Information sheets** available on our website.

**BEFORE STARTING AZATHIOPRINE OR MERCAPTOPYRINE**

- Read the Azathioprine and Mercaptopurine information sheet.

---

- Make an appointment with your GP to discuss starting the medication and to enlist your GP's help with monitoring

---

- Ensure that you are up to date with your vaccinations:
  - a) **Influenza** vaccination (Fluvax® - yearly).
  - b) **Pneumococcal** vaccination (Pneumovax® - 5 yearly).

- Ensure that your pap smears are up-to-date:
  - a) Annual pap smears are recommended if sexually active.

---

- Ensure that you have discussed the following with your doctor and had the necessary screening tests:
  - a) Hepatitis B
  - b) Tuberculosis (TB)
  - c) Varicella (chicken pox)
  - d) TPMT genotype.

---

- Ensure that you have discussed your complete medical history with your doctor, particularly if you have had severe infections, or cancer.

---

- Ensure that you have provided your doctor with an up to date medication list.

---

- Ensure that you have discussed your plans for pregnancy with your doctor.

**AFTER STARTING AZATHIOPRINE OR MERCAPTOPYRINE**

- Make an appointment with your GP to discuss and commence monitoring.

---

- Have regular blood tests for full blood count and liver function tests:
  - a) **Weekly for at least 4 weeks** after you reach a stable dose.
  - b) **Monthly for 3 months** thereafter.
  - c) **3-monthly for as long as you are on treatment.**

- Ensure that you are up to date with your:
  - a) **Pneumococcal** vaccination (Pneumovax® - 5 yearly).
  - b) **Influenza** vaccination (Fluvax® - yearly).

---

- Avoid live vaccines:
  - polio
  - yellow fever
  - MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) and
  - BCG (tuberculosis).

---

- Be careful in the sun and vigilant with sun protection. The skin's sensitivity is increased whilst taking these medications and there is higher risk of skin cancer.

---

- Skin checks yearly with either your GP or a dermatologist.

---

- Annual pap smears are recommended for sexually active women whilst on therapy.

**Please contact your doctor if you have any concerns.**

**QUESTIONS?** Please don't hesitate to contact Lumen Gastroenterology on 08 8267 1766