

Mercaptopurine

About This Medicine

MERCAPTOPURINE (mer kap toe PYOOR een) treats leukemia. It works by slowing down the growth of cancer cells. It is given by mouth (orally).

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your care team you have questions.

Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Rash

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in greater than 5% of people treated with mercaptopurine. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your care team.

Warnings and Precautions

- Changes in your liver function, which may be life-threatening
- Severe bone marrow suppression
- Decrease immune function, which increases your risk of infection
- This medicine may raise your risk of getting another cancer, such as lymphoma, skin cancer, sarcomas and uterine cervical cancer.
- Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis - an immune reaction that can cause damage to blood cells in your bone marrow and any organs in your body, which can be life-threatening. You may have a

higher risk of developing this condition if you have a history of an autoimmune disorder, especially inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your care team.

Important Information

- This medicine is available in tablets and oral suspension. Do not use them interchangeably.
- Talk to your care team before receiving any vaccinations during your treatment. Some vaccinations are not recommended while receiving mercaptopurine.

How to Take Your Medicine

- **Tablets:** Swallow the medicine whole, consistently with or without food. Tell your care team if you have trouble swallowing the tablets.
- **Oral Suspension:** Shake bottle vigorously for 30 second prior to using. If you use a syringe for dispensing, ensure the syringe is cleaned with soap and water, rinse and dried well in between usage. Once the bottle has been opened, it should be used within 8 weeks.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your care team for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Overdosage:** If you think you have taken too much of this medicine contact a poison control center or emergency room at once.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling your medicine. Your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- This medicine may be present in the urine, stool and other body fluids such as blood, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids. Take precautions to prevent others from coming in contact with your medicine or your body fluids. Follow safety precautions during your treatment and for as long as directed by your care team after your treatment. If you take a pill each day, follow these precautions every day.
- If you get any oral suspension on your skin or in your eyes, you should wash the area of the skin well with soap and water right away. Wash your eyes with flowing water and call your care team. Call your care team if you get a skin reaction.
- **Storage:** Store tablets and oral suspension in the original container at room temperature, in a dry place. Keep the lid tightly closed. Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medicine label. Some facilities have take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your care team how to dispose of unused medicine.

Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.



- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your care team tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your care team before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your care team about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your care team about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- To help with decreased appetite, eat small, frequent meals. Eat foods high in calories and protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- Consider using sauces and spices to increase taste. Daily exercise, with your care team's approval, may increase your appetite.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your care team says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your care team for medicine if your rash bothers you.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors even for a short time. Cover up when you are out in the sun. Wear wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants. Keep your neck, chest, and back covered.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of mercaptopurine with food.
- Check with your care team about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known medicine interactions with mercaptopurine. Also, check with your care team before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- There are known interactions of mercaptopurine with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your care team what precautions you should take.

When to Call Your Care Team

Call your care team if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills



- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- New rash and/or itching that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Develop sensitivity to sunlight/light
- Signs of hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis: fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, yellowing of the eyes or skin, nausea, vomiting (throwing up), headache, confusion, trouble breathing, and/or rash
- Signs of infection: fever or chills, cough, trouble breathing, severe pain in your abdomen, trouble urinating, burning or pain when you pass urine, redness and/or swelling of the skin
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can cause serious birth defects. If you can become pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for 6 months after the last dose. If you can get your partner pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine and for 3 months after the last dose. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant or think your partner might be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Do not breastfeed while taking this medicine and for 1 week after the last dose.
- **Fertility Warning:** This medicine can affect your ability to have children in the future. If you plan to have children, talk with your care team.

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