

Mercaptopurine (6-Mp)



- **Mercaptopurine** (mer-kap-toe-PYOOR-een) is a drug which is used to treat some kinds of leukemia (blood cancer). It is a tablet to take by mouth. The tablet contains lactose.
- **Blood tests** may be taken during your treatment at regular intervals. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood count and/or other side effects.
- **Take** mercaptopurine at the same time each day exactly as directed by your doctor, preferably on an empty stomach; it may be taken with food if needed. Do not take mercaptopurine with milk or milk based products because there is an enzyme in cow's milk that can break down this drug. Make sure you understand the directions.
- If you **vomit** within 1 hour of taking mercaptopurine, check with your doctor. You will be told whether to take the dose again or to wait until the next scheduled dose.
- If you **miss** a dose of mercaptopurine, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- Your doctor may tell you to **drink lots of liquids** (8-12 cups a day). This helps prevent kidney problems in some kinds of cancer.
- **Store** mercaptopurine tablets out of reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.
- Some drugs, herbal products and supplements may **interact** with your treatment. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of these, or before you start taking any new drugs.
- Mercaptopurine may damage sperm and may be harmful to the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with mercaptopurine. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists or other healthcare providers that you are being treated with this medication before you receive any other treatment from them.

Changes in blood counts

This drug may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of getting an infection.	To help prevent infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. Avoid crowds and people who are sick. Visit the Urgent Care Unit at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). When the platelet count is low you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.	To help prevent bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. Avoid constipation. Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. Some medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen or other pain medications may increase your risk of bleeding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For minor pain, try paracetamol (Panadol®) Refer to your doctor if any of these medications have been prescribed to you.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea and vomiting may sometimes occur.	You will be given a prescription for anti-nausea drug(s) to take before your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink plenty of liquids. Eat and drink often in small amounts.
Your skin may darken in some areas such as your hands, elbows and knees. Your skin may also redden where you have had radiation treatments.	This will slowly return to normal once you stop treatment with mercaptopurine.
Hair loss is rare with mercaptopurine. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with mercaptopurine. Colour and texture may change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer); chills; cough; sore throat; pain or burning when you pass urine; redness, pain or swelling of any area of your body; sores forming anywhere on your body.
- Signs of **bleeding** problems such as black tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE

- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stool.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Skin rash.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR



This is a summary of useful information to help you understand and take your medicine safely .

We are available to answer your questions For urgent inquiries contact :

- **Urgent care unit at the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) TEL : 44397179 (available 24 hours, all week days).**

For further information or question contact :

- **Your doctor** (from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Clinical Pharmacy section**, TEL: 44397239 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Outpatient Pharmacy**, TEL: 44397531, 44397825 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .

Pharmacy Department