

# ALLOPURINOL

**Other names:** Allohexal®, Apo-Allopurinol®, Allopurinol Sandoz®



**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

## Why are you taking this medication?

Allopurinol belongs to a group of medicines known as xanthine oxidase inhibitors (**anti-gout medicine**).

It works by inhibiting an enzyme in the body called xanthine oxidase, which is responsible for making uric acid. If too much uric acid is produced, this can cause kidney stones and gout. Taking allopurinol regularly helps prevent and/or reduce the severity of gout attacks (less pain, swelling and inflammation) by decreasing uric acid build up in the joints. However, allopurinol will not ease an acute gout attack once it has begun.

## When to take this medicine

- Take your medication exactly as directed by your doctor
- Take allopurinol with or immediately after food, and with a full glass of water
- Do not stop taking allopurinol, even in an acute gout attack, unless advised by your doctor
- Never take more than the prescribed dose

If you think the medicine is not working, **keep taking the allopurinol**, even if you are taking other medicines for gout attacks. The attacks should become shorter and less severe after you take allopurinol. It takes 2 to 3 months to be fully effective.

## If you miss a dose

Take your dose as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- burning sensation of the skin
- chills, fever or sore throat
- joint or abdominal pain or muscle aches
- skin rash, redness, itching or hives
- trouble breathing
- jaundice (yellowing of skin/eyes)
- excessive thirst, going to the toilet more often, a burning feeling when passing urine

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you:

- drowsiness, dizziness
- headache
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea
- alteration or loss of taste
- indigestion

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any side effect is of a concern to you.

### **Other Medicines**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Careful monitoring is required when taking allopurinol with other medication, such as:

- anticoagulants (blood thinner e.g. warfarin)
- amoxicillin (can cause a rash, so best avoid)
- cyclosporin (can increase cyclosporin blood level)
- azathioprine
- mercaptopurine (a medicine used to treat some cancers - monitoring of your blood is required)
- theophylline (can increase theophylline blood level)

### **Other Information**

To prevent gout attacks, avoid alcohol and purine-rich foods. Purine-rich foods include anchovies, sardines, liver, kidney, lentils and sweetbreads, so avoid these if you can.

### **Storage**

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**