

GENERIC NAME:

Sulfasalazine



BRAND NAME:

Salazopyrin, Salazopyrin En-tabs

How it works:

- Sulfasalazine is a sulfonamide or sulfa medicine, which belongs to a family of medicines called anti-infectives, used to treat inflammatory bowel disease, such as enteritis or colitis.
- It is also classified as a Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drug (DMARD) to help control the active inflammatory process in Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis and other types of arthritis.
- Contains both an antibiotic (sulpha) & an anti-inflammatory (salicylate) component.

How quickly it works:

- Benefit begins within 4 to 8 weeks.
- If there is an inadequate response to therapy at 8 to 12 weeks, your doctor may increase the dosage.

How to take:

- Best taken twice a day after meals or with food to lessen stomach upset
- Each dose should be taken with a full glass (8 oz) of water. Each day you should drink 1.5 litres (six 8 oz of water) while taking sulfasalazine to prevent unwanted side effects.
- Each tablet is 500 mg, available as a plain or enteric-coated tablet
- Take one tablet daily at supper for one week then gradually increase by one tablet each week until a maximum of 4

tablets per day.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
morning		•	•	• •
evening	•	•	• •	• •



What if you miss a dose of medication?

If taking medication more than once a day, skip the dose of medication that you missed and wait until your next dose is due.

Lab Tests:



- CBC (WBC, hemoglobin, platelet count), AST, ALT (liver enzymes) are done every 2 weeks for 2 months, then every 3 months.
- ESR is done initially and then every 3 months.
- Your doctor will monitor the results of your lab tests to ensure you are receiving benefit from sulfasalazine and that there are no harmful changes occurring in your blood or liver.

Side Effects:

Possible side effects:

- nausea & upset stomach
- loss of appetite
- headache or slight dizziness
- skin rash
- yellow-orange colour to urine (normal - does not require medical attention)

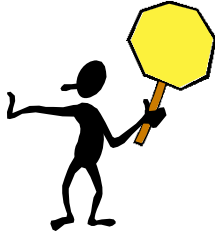
Less common side effects:

- increase sensitivity of skin to sunlight
- increase in liver enzymes (AST, ALT) due to irritation of the liver.
- low blood-cell count (drop in white blood cells, red blood cells and/or platelets)
- unusual bleeding or bruising

Managing Side Effects:



Precautions:



Illness:



Contact your doctor

- if you develop any of the above signs or symptoms.
- Side effects can occur any time during treatment, are often temporary and may be related to the amount of medication being taken.
- A reduction in the dosage or a withdrawal of sulfasalazine may be required.
- An increase in the frequency of blood testing may also be required.
- Take your medication with food and drink lots of water throughout the day.



Previous Allergic Reactions

- Before taking, ensure you inform your doctor if you have had a previous reaction to any sulfa medications, including sulfonamides (sulpha antibiotics, glyburide), furosemide or thiazide diuretics (water pills) or aspirin.

Pregnancy

- Inform your doctor if you are pregnant or intending to become pregnant, planning to father a child or breastfeeding.
- Sulfasalazine is known to reduce sperm counts in men. This effect is reversed when the medication is discontinued.

Drug Combinations

- Sulfasalazine may interact with other medications. Discuss other prescription and non-prescription medications you are taking with your doctor prior to starting sulfasalazine.
- It is safe to take Sulfasalazine with other DMARDs (Gold, Methotrexate & Plaquenil), biologics (Enbrel, Remicade etc), non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), tylenol & prednisone.

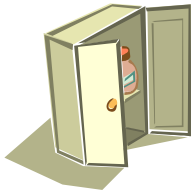
- If illness occurs while taking sulfasalazine, stop the medication if unable to tolerate the medication & fluid requirements. Continue taking when you feel better.

Surgery



- Your medication may be stopped the week of your surgery.
- Develop a plan with your doctor about medications & vitamin/mineral or herbal supplements when having upcoming surgery, dental work or other procedures.

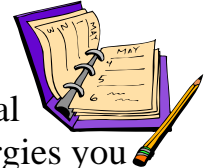
Storage:



- Keep the tablets in their original container.
- Store at room temperature, away from heat, moisture and direct light.

General medication considerations:

- 1. Take your medication as instructed by your physician.**
Work with your doctor to determine how much medication you need. Medications are started at low dosages and increased slowly to decrease the risk of side effects. Taking more medication increases this risk. Skipping doses will decrease the desired effect of the medication.
- 2. Keep a diary.**
As a reminder, record when you take your medications & any reasons for changes or withdrawal of medications.
- 3. Keep a medication list in your wallet.**
Record all medications, vitamin/mineral & herbal supplements you are presently taking & any allergies you may have.



Disclaimer:

This information does not replace medical advice. Specific questions about medications should be discussed with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

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