



**PAN MERSEY AREA PRESCRIBING COMMITTEE**  
**SHARED CARE FRAMEWORK**  
**FIRST APC BOARD DATE: 27 SEP 2017** Area Prescribing Committee  
**LAST APC BOARD DATE: 28 NOV 2018**



**Pan Mersey**

Area Prescribing Committee

## MERCAPTOPYRINE for patients within adult services

<p><b>1. Background</b></p>	<p>The thiopurines (azathioprine and mercaptopurine) are immunomodulatory agents used to induce and maintain remission in IBD. Although unlicensed to treat these indications, their use is widely established in inflammatory bowel disease and is recommended for use in IBD by European (ECCO) and UK (BSG) guidelines for the management of IBD.</p> <p>Mercaptopurine is used only for inflammatory bowel diseases when patients are unable to tolerate azathioprine.</p> <p>Indications, dose adjustments and monitoring requirements for disease modifying drugs (DMDs) (licensed and unlicensed indications) included in this Framework are in line with national guidance published by the British Society for Rheumatology 2017. N.B. Mercaptopurine is not included in these 2017 guidelines, but monitoring requirements in this document are in line with those included for azathioprine.</p>
<p><b>2. Licensed Indications</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>3. Locally agreed off-label use</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inflammatory Bowel Disease</li> <li>• Rarely used by rheumatology as an alternative to azathioprine</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Initiation and ongoing dose regime</b></p>	<p><b><u>Rheumatology patients managed by Wirral Trust</u></b>  Secondary care to diagnose and provide written instructions to the GP for prescribing and escalation of treatment.</p> <p><b><u>Other Patients</u></b>  Transfer of monitoring and prescribing to Primary care is normally after 3 months</p> <p><b>The duration of treatment will be determined by the specialist based on clinical response and tolerability.</b></p> <p>Dose is variable and will be decided by the clinical team initiating treatment. Clinical response may not be evident before 6 weeks and may take up to 3 months.</p> <p>Lower doses are required in severe renal or hepatic impairment, or frail older people.</p> <p>The initial oral dose of mercaptopurine is usually 25mg once daily and is gradually increased by 25mg increments to a maintenance dose of 1 – 1.5mg/kg daily. Doses are generally determined by metabolite monitoring.</p>

	<p><b>All dose adjustments will be the responsibility of the initiating specialist unless directions have been discussed and agreed with the primary care clinician</b></p> <p>Dose increases should be monitored by FBC creatinine/eGFR, ALT and/or AST and albumin every 2 weeks for 6 weeks after the dose increase, then revert back to the previous schedule.</p> <p><b>Termination of treatment will be the responsibility of the specialist.</b></p>					
<p><b>Rheumatology patients managed by Wirral Trust</b> 5. Baseline investigations to be undertaken by specialist. Initial monitoring and dose titration to be undertaken by GP</p> <p><b>Other Patients</b> 5. Baseline investigations, initial monitoring and dose titration to be undertaken by specialist</p>	<p><b>Baseline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Height, weight, BP, FBC, creatinine/eGFR, ALT and /or AST, albumin.</li> <li>• Baseline thiopurine methyltransferase (TPMT)</li> <li>• Vaccinations against pneumococcus and influenza are recommended.</li> <li>• Shingles vaccine (Zostavax) is recommended as per the JCVI for eligible patients.</li> <li>• Specialist to highlight in the first clinic letter notifying the GP of the decision to initiate DMDs that the GP will need to give the shingles vaccine if the patient is older than 69 years and the pneumococcal vaccine if this has not already been given. The GP should also be advised to add the patient to the influenza vaccine list.</li> <li>• Patients should be assessed for comorbidities that may influence DMD choice, including evaluation of respiratory disease and screening for occult viral infection.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FBC, creatinine/eGFR, ALT and /or AST and albumin every 2 weeks until on stable dose for 6 weeks;</li> <li>• Once on stable dose, monthly FBC, creatinine/eGFR, ALT and /or AST and albumin for 3 months</li> </ul> <p>(Initial monitoring may be different for gastroenterology indications)</p>					
<p><b>6. Ongoing monitoring requirements to be undertaken by primary care.</b></p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="531 1368 911 1424">Monitoring</th> <th data-bbox="911 1368 1497 1424">Frequency</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1424 911 1872">           FBC, Creatinine/eGFR, ALT and/or AST, Albumin             CRP and ESR (rheumatology patients only)         </td> <td data-bbox="911 1424 1497 1872">           After the initial monitoring period (see section 5), every 12 weeks, or more frequently in patients at higher risk of toxicity as advised by the specialist team. NB: Some of the initial monitoring (likely to be 1-2 months of monthly monitoring) may take place in primary care. The exact frequency of the monitoring to be communicated by the specialist in all cases.             This includes patients heterozygous of TMPT         </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Monitoring	Frequency	FBC, Creatinine/eGFR, ALT and/or AST, Albumin  CRP and ESR (rheumatology patients only)	After the initial monitoring period (see section 5), every 12 weeks, or more frequently in patients at higher risk of toxicity as advised by the specialist team. NB: Some of the initial monitoring (likely to be 1-2 months of monthly monitoring) may take place in primary care. The exact frequency of the monitoring to be communicated by the specialist in all cases.  This includes patients heterozygous of TMPT	
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<p><b>7. Pharmaceutical aspects</b></p>	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1872 911 1939">Route of administration</td> <td data-bbox="911 1872 1497 1939">Mercaptopurine 50mg tablets</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="531 1939 911 2038">Formulation</td> <td data-bbox="911 1939 1497 2038">Tablets may be taken with food or on an empty stomach, but patients should standardise the method of administration.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Route of administration	Mercaptopurine 50mg tablets	Formulation	Tablets may be taken with food or on an empty stomach, but patients should standardise the method of administration.	
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		The dose should not be taken with milk or dairy products
	Administration details	Mercaptopurine is also available as an oral suspension <i>Xaluprine</i> ® but the tablets and oral suspension are not bioequivalent. Haematological monitoring is advised when switching formulations
	Other important information	MHRA Safety Alert: <a href="#">Recent drug-name confusion</a>
<b>8. Contraindications</b>  Please note this does not replace the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) and should be read in conjunction with it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hypersensitivity to mercaptopurine or to any other component of the preparation</li> <li>Previous mercaptopurine-induced pancreatitis</li> <li><b>Very low TPMT activity (Homozygous recessive): Avoid. Can be fatal</b></li> </ul>	
<b>9. Significant drug interactions</b>	<p>If considering prescribing allopurinol, refer the patient back to the consultant for advice and a dose adjustment. If allopurinol is given concomitantly with mercaptopurine, the dose of mercaptopurine should be reduced to 25 % of the original dose.</p> <p>For a comprehensive list consult the BNF or Summary of Product Characteristics. <a href="#">SPC</a></p> <p>Seek advice from the initiating Specialist if there are any concerns about interactions.</p>	
<b>10. Adverse Effects and managements</b>	Result	Action
	Abnormal bruising or severe sore throat	Stop drug until FBC results available, contact Specialist Nurse (SN)
	Fall in WCC $<3.5 \times 10^9/l$	Stop drug. Contact SN
	Fall in neutrophils $<1.6 \times 10^9/l$	
	Fall in platelets $<140 \times 10^9/l$	
	Increased MCV $>105f/l$	Check folate, B12 & TSH. Treat if results are abnormal, contact SN for advice and management if normal.
	Unexplained reduction in albumin $<30g/l$	Stop drug. Contact SN
	Abnormal LFTs – AST or ALT $>100U/l$	Stop drug. Contact SN
	Rash:	Stop drug and contact SN.
	Mouth ulcers:	Stop drug and contact SN.
Acute abdominal pain	Check serum amylase. Consider pancreatitis.	
Increase in serum creatinine $>30\%$ over period of 12 months or less OR decline in eGFR $> 25\%$	Contact specialist nurse if there is new or unexplained renal impairment	
<b>11. Advice to patients and carers</b>	The specialist will counsel the patient with regard to the benefits and risks of treatment and will provide the patient with any relevant information and advice, including patient information leaflets on	

	individual drugs.
<b>12. Pregnancy and breast feeding</b>	Compatible throughout pregnancy at 1mg/kg/day following a careful assessment of risk versus benefit Compatible with breastfeeding Compatible with paternal exposure  (BSR & BHPR guideline on prescribing in pregnancy and breastfeeding)
<b>13. Specialist contact information</b>	See Appendix 2
<b>14. Additional information</b>	<b>Where patient care is transferred from one specialist service or GP practice to another, a new shared care agreement must be completed.</b>
<b>15. References</b>	<a href="#">BSR monitoring guidelines</a>
<b>16. To be read in conjunction with the following documents.</b>	1. Policy for Shared Care 2. Shared care agreement. When two or more DMDs are initiated, one shared care agreement form should be completed for all relevant drugs.

## Appendix 1

### Policy for Shared Care

Shared care is only appropriate if it provides an optimum solution for the patient and it meets the criteria outlined in the Shared Care section of the Pan Mersey **Definitions and Criteria for Categorisation of Medicines in the Pan Mersey Formulary** document.

Before prescribing responsibilities are transferred to primary care:

- Prescribing responsibility will only be transferred when the consultant and the patient's GP agree that the patient's condition is stable.
- All information required by the shared care framework for the individual medicine has been provided to the patient's GP.
- Patients will only be referred to the GP once the GP has agreed to the Shared Care Agreement and returned signed copies.

**Inherent in any shared care agreement is the understanding that participation is at the discretion of the GP, subject to the availability of sufficient information to support clinical confidence.**

### Specialist Responsibilities in Shared Care

- For Rheumatology patients under Wirral Trust, Specialist to ensure baseline monitoring of full blood count and biochemical profile as described by the shared care framework
- For all other patients, Specialists to initiate the medicine, prescribe, monitor for toxicity and efficacy as described by the shared care framework until the patient is stabilised.
- To ensure the patient or their carer:
  - Is counselled with regard to the risks and benefits of the medicine.
  - Provide any necessary written information to the patient with regard to the individual medicine including patient information leaflets on individual drugs.
  - Obtain and document informed consent from the patient when any medicines is prescribed for an off-label indication for any condition
- To be familiar with the shared care framework.
- To provide all information to the patient's GP as required by the shared care framework when prescribing responsibility is initially transferred and at any subsequent times as necessary for safe and effective treatment of the patient.

- To assess the patient regularly as necessary for the duration of therapy.
- To review the patient promptly if required by the GP concerned.
- To meet any additional requirements as required by the individual medicine shared care framework.
- To communicate failure of a patient to attend a routine hospital review and advise the GP of appropriate action to be taken.
- **Addition of a second DMD:** Following the addition of a new drug to an existing regime covered by a Shared Care Agreement, the Specialist must initiate, prescribe and monitor the new drug in accordance with the relevant shared care agreement including subsequent review and inform the GP of this. A new Shared Care Agreement must then be initiated for the new drug.

### Primary Care Responsibilities in Shared Care

- To reply to a written request for Shared Care within 21 days ensuring both copies of the Shared Care Agreement are signed if appropriate.

If agreeing to shared care, the GP is asked to:

- To provide prescribe or manage and monitor the medicine as advised by the Specialist and in line with the individual Shared Care Framework.
- To review the patient as required by the Shared Care Framework
- To make appropriate and contemporaneous records of prescribing and/or monitoring and to note the existence of the Shared Care Agreement on the patient's clinical record. A READ code of "6652 Shared Care- Specialist/GP" can be used.
- To be familiar with the individual Shared Care Framework.
- To report any adverse effects of treatment to the specialist team.
- To inform the Specialist of any relevant change in the patient's circumstances.
- To seek Specialist advice as appropriate.
- To meet any additional requirements as required by the individual Shared Care Framework.
- To respond to Specialist communication relating to any change or addition to the patients treatment covered by the Shared Care Agreement.

**Appendix 2: Shared Care Agreement**

**Disease modifying drugs (DMDs)**

**Request by Specialist Clinician for the patient's GP to enter into a shared care agreement**

**Part 1**

**To be signed by Consultant / Prescribing member of the Specialist Team**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of patient \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Patient NHS No \_\_\_\_\_

Patient hospital unit No \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosed condition \_\_\_\_\_

If using addressograph label please attach one to each copy

Dear Dr \_\_\_\_\_

I request that you prescribe

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

for the above patient in accordance with the enclosed shared care framework.

**Last Prescription Issued: ..... / ..... / ..... Next Supply Due: ..... / ..... / .....**

**Date of last blood test: ..... / ..... / ..... Date of next blood test: ..... / ..... / .....**

**Frequency of blood test: .....**

**I confirm that the patient has been stabilised and reviewed on the above regime in accordance with the Shared Care Framework and Policy.**

**I confirm that if this is a Shared Care Agreement for a drug indication which is unlicensed or off label, informed consent has been received.**   N/A

**Details of Specialist Clinicians**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Consultant / Prescribing member of the Specialist Team \*circle or underline as appropriate*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

In all cases, please also provide the name and contact details of the Consultant.

When the request for shared care is made by a prescriber who is not the consultant, it is the supervising consultant who takes medico-legal responsibility for the agreement.

**Consultant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details:**

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for return  
of documentation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2**  
**To be completed by Primary Care Clinician**

Patient name \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to prescribe \_\_\_\_\_ for the above patient in accordance with the enclosed shared care framework.

GP signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

GP name \_\_\_\_\_ Please print

**GP:** Please sign and return a copy **within 21 calendar days** to the address above

**OR**

**GP-** If you do not agree to prescribe, please delete the section above and provide any supporting information as appropriate below: