



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Azacitidine tablets

Other names: ONUREG®

- **Azacitidine** (a" za sye' ti deen) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a tablet that you take by mouth. Tablets contain lactose.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to azacitidine before taking azacitidine.
- **Blood tests** may be taken regularly during treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- It is important to **take** azacitidine exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions. Take azacitidine about the same time each day.
- You may **take** azacitidine with food or on an empty stomach.
- If you **miss a dose** of azacitidine, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times. Do NOT take more than one dose to make up for the missed dose. Tell your healthcare team at your next visit that you have missed a dose.
- If you **vomit** the dose of azacitidine, do not take a second dose. Skip the dose and go back to your usual dosing times the next day. Call your healthcare team during office hours for advice as a medication to prevent nausea may be required for future doses.
- Other drugs are not expected to interact with azacitidine. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of azacitidine.
- Azacitidine may affect **fertility** in men. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with azacitidine.
- Azacitidine may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with azacitidine and for six months after your treatment has ended. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.

- **Store** azacitidine tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture. Store in original blister packaging.
- **Tell** your doctor, dentist, and other health professionals that you are being treated with azacitidine before you receive any treatment from them.

Changes in blood counts

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

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your healthcare team immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
<p>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.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <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. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®).

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur. If you are vomiting and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated.</p>	<p>You will be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take before your treatment and/or at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.* <p>Tell your healthcare team if nausea or vomiting continues or is not controlled with your antinausea drug(s).</p>
<p>Diarrhea commonly occurs. If you have diarrhea and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.* • Diarrhea may be treated with loperamide 2 mg tablets (e.g., IMODIUM®). You can buy loperamide at any pharmacy without a prescription. <p>Tell your healthcare team if you have diarrhea for more than 24 hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet/capsule may be causing your diarrhea. Take LACTAID® tablets just before your azacitidine dose.
<p>Constipation may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*
<p>Sugar control may be affected in patients with diabetes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your blood sugar regularly if you have diabetes.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Minor bleeding, such as nosebleeds , may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat. • Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes. • After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes. • Stay quiet for a few hours and do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped. • Get emergency help if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.
Joint pain, back pain, or pain in your arms and legs may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day for mild to moderate pain. Tell your healthcare team if the pain interferes with your activity.
Loss of appetite and weight loss sometimes occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*
Tiredness and lack of energy may commonly occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i>.*
Hair loss does not occur with azacitidine.	

*Please ask your nurse or pharmacist for a copy.

STOP TAKING AZACITIDINE AND CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black or tarry stools, blood in urine, pinpoint red spots on skin, or extensive bruising.
- **Fainting, dizziness, or loss of consciousness.**
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or fainting.

