

Sulfasalazine

What is Sulfasalazine?

- Also known as a Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drug (DMARDs)
- It helps reduce:
 - Joint pain
 - Swelling
 - Stiffness
 - Long-term joint damage

Your Sulfasalazine prescription:

- Your Sulfasalazine tablets will be prescribed by your GP
- Sulfasalazine comes in 500mg tablets, your doctor will tell you the correct dose to take. Always follow your prescription and doctors advice.
- Please swallow tablet whole with a glass of water. Do not break, crush or chew them.
- Please allow 12 weeks for Sulfasalazine to take effect.

Blood monitoring:

- Once every 2 weeks for 6 weeks, then once monthly for 3 months, then once every 3 months thereafter.
- Blood monitoring after 54 weeks if stable
- It is your responsibility to contact your GP to arrange these bloods
- If there is anything abnormal with your blood results your GP will inform us or may want to recheck them again

Side Effects:

Most people tolerate Sulfasalazine, but side effects can occur in a small number of patients.

- We advise persevering with Sulfasalazine however if side effects become to intolerable please contact us on the nurse advice line.
- If you notice any skin rashes please stop the medication and contact our nurse advice line.

More information:

- **Arthritis UK** – [Sulfasalazine](#)
- Patient information leaflet included with your medication

Infections/Antibiotics:

Withhold Sulfasalazine if you:

- Have any active infection
- Are taking antibiotics
- Resume Sulfasalazine 2 weeks after you are free from infection and no longer on antibiotics.
- We also advise keeping up to date with regular vaccinations such as flu, COVID, pneumococcal and shingles vaccinations.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding:

- Women can safely take sulfasalazine when trying for a baby and during pregnancy. It is often recommended to continue it during pregnancy to help prevent flare-ups.
- If you are pregnant and taking sulfasalazine, you should also take folic acid. Sulfasalazine can lower folic acid levels, and folic acid helps reduce the risk of conditions such as spina bifida.
- You can usually breastfeed while taking sulfasalazine, unless your baby is premature or at risk of jaundice. If you are unsure, contact us on the rheumatology advice line.

- Men do not need to stop sulfasalazine when trying to father a child.
- Sulfasalazine can lower sperm count, but this usually returns to normal 2-3 months after stopping the medication. It should not be used as contraception.