



## **SALAZOPYRIN (SULFASALSINE)**

### **DRUG INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES**

#### **WHY IS SALAZOPYRIN PRESCRIBED?**

Salazopyrine is a sulpha based drug used to control inflammation of arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease. It is used when non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as Naproxen and Ibuprofen, do not adequately control the arthritis. It is frequently used in addition to NSAIDS.

#### **HOW IS SALAZOPYRIN TAKEN?**

Salazopyrine is taken as a tablet, usually in an enteric-coated form to protect the stomach. It is prescribed in gradually increasing dosage until a maintenance dose is reached-usually by the fourth week. Dosage depends on the child's weight. It should be taken after a meal to prevent stomach upset, usually twice a day.

#### **HOW WILL I KNOW IF SALAZOPYRIN IS WORKING?**

Salazopyrin does not cure arthritis, but it does reduce pain and the inflammatory response which, if persistent, contributes to joint damage. You should expect an improvement in pain, stiffness, swelling and movement in the affected joints. The improvement may occur within a few weeks, however it is usual for it to take 3 weeks or longer before the doctor can assess whether benefit from the salazopyrin is being achieved.

#### **HOW LONG WILL MY CHILD BE ON THIS MEDICATION?**

This is variable. Generally, Salazopyrin is used for many months, possibly years, for as long as it is controlling your arthritis, or until your arthritis goes into remission. In order to get optimal control of your arthritis, Salazopyrin should not be stopped, or the prescribed dose reduced. The doctor will decide after examining you, when, or if you can stop the medication, otherwise you should continue it unless you have side-effects.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS?**

Below is a list of the most common side effects. If any of these or any unusual symptoms occur, notify your doctor or clinic nurse.

- ❖ stomach pain; nausea; vomiting; diarrhea
- ❖ skin rash
- ❖ mouth ulcers/sores
- ❖ headaches, dizziness, ringing in the ears
- ❖ pinkish urine
- ❖ reduced production of red and white blood cells (checked by blood test).

## **PRECAUTIONS WHILE TAKING SALAZOPYRIN**

- ❖ Do not take if your child is allergic to sulpha based drugs.
- ❖ Notify your doctor and pharmacist about any other medications that your child is taking, both prescription and non-prescription drugs. The reason for this is to help prevent adverse drug interactions.
- ❖ Occasionally Salazopyrin can suppress the bone marrow's ability to produce red and white blood cells, and can interfere with liver function. It is therefore necessary to monitor these possibilities by doing regular blood tests.
  - a. Blood tests are done every three months if results remain normal.
  - b. These tests can be done at your local laboratory and results sent to the clinic and your general practitioner.
- ❖ Do not take Aspirin (ASA), ASA-containing drugs in addition to Salazopyrin unless prescribed by the doctor. Use plain Tylenol (Acetaminophen) to control pain and fever as necessary.
- ❖ Report any unusual symptoms to the doctor or nurse, even if you are not sure whether or not they are related to Salazopyrin.

For any concerns or questions, contact Rheumatology nurse  
If urgent call rheumatologist on call@ 604-875-2161

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