

Package leaflet: Information for the user
Salazopyrin® 500 mg Tablets
Sulfasalazine

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you take this medicine because it contains important information for you.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you only. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their signs of illness are the same as yours.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet.

What is in this leaflet:

1. What Salazopyrin Tablets are and what they are used for
2. What you need to know before you take Salazopyrin Tablets
3. How to take Salazopyrin Tablets
4. Possible side effects
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1. What Salazopyrin Tablets are and what they are used for

The active substance in Salazopyrin Tablets is sulfasalazine which is an anti-inflammatory drug and belongs to a group of medicines called aminosalicylates.

Your doctor may give you Salazopyrin Tablets to treat and manage inflammation caused by rheumatoid arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease.

The main forms of inflammatory bowel disease are Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease. Although the diseases have some features in common, there are some important differences: **Ulcerative Colitis** is an inflammatory disease which affects only the large bowel (colon and back passage). The lining of the bowel becomes inflamed (red and swollen) and symptoms include abdominal pain and diarrhoea (which may contain blood and mucus). Salazopyrin Tablets are used to control the flare-ups of ulcerative colitis. They may also be used at lower doses to prevent more flare-ups of ulcerative colitis.

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory disease which may affect any part of the digestive system from the mouth to the anus, but it most commonly affects the last part of the small bowel and the first part of the large bowel. Symptoms include abdominal pain and diarrhoea (which may be bloody). Salazopyrin Tablets are used to control the flare-ups of Crohn's Disease.

Rheumatoid arthritis Salazopyrin Tablets can be given when a group of medicines known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, e.g. aspirin and ibuprofen) are not working. Salazopyrin can help prevent damage to joints, and reduce swelling and stiffness, caused by rheumatoid arthritis.

You must talk to a doctor if you do not feel better or if you feel worse.

2. What you need to know before you take Salazopyrin Tablets

Do not use Salazopyrin Tablets:

- if you are allergic (hypersensitive) to any of the ingredients of Salazopyrin Tablets (listed in section 6).
- if you are allergic (hypersensitive) to salicylates (e.g. aspirin) or sulfonamides (e.g. a certain type of antibiotic).
- if you have a disease known as porphyria (a rare blood pigment disorder). Your doctor will have already told you if you have this disease.
- if you have jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Salazopyrin Tablets are **not to be used in children under 2 years** of age.

Warnings and precautions

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking Salazopyrin tablets:

- If you suffer from problems with your liver or kidneys?
- If you suffer from blood disorders, such as a low number of red or white blood cells.
- If you suffer from glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency (an inherited condition in which the body doesn't have enough of an enzyme known as glucose-6-dehydrogenase which helps red blood cells to function normally).
- If you have a history of recurring chronic infections or an underlying condition which may predispose you to infections

Oral sulfasalazine inhibits the absorption and metabolism of folic acid and may cause folic acid deficiency potentially resulting in serious blood disorders (e.g., macrocytosis and pancytopenia), this can be normalised by administration of folic acid or folinic acid (leucovorin).

Because sulfasalazine causes crystalluria and kidney stone formation, adequate fluid intake should be ensured during treatment.

Potentially life-threatening skin rashes (exfoliative dermatitis, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis) have been reported with the use of Salazopyrin Tablets, appearing initially as reddish target-like spots or circular patches often with central blisters on the trunk. Additional signs to look for include ulcers in the mouth, throat, nose, genitals and conjunctivitis (red and swollen eyes). These potentially life-threatening skin rashes are often accompanied by flu-like symptoms. The rash may progress to widespread blistering or peeling of the skin. The highest risk for occurrence of serious skin reactions is within the first weeks of treatment.

If you have developed Stevens-Johnson syndrome or toxic epidermal necrolysis with the use of Salazopyrin Tablets you must not be re-started on Salazopyrin Tablets at any time. If you develop a rash or these skin symptoms, stop taking Salazopyrin Tablets, seek immediate advice from a doctor and tell him that you are taking this medicine.

If you experience rash or fever or swollen gland while taking Salazopyrin you should speak to your doctor as this may be a sign of DRESS (drug rash with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms). Your doctor may advise you to stop taking Salazopyrin.

Children and adolescents

Sulfasalazine is not recommended if you are a child and have systemic-onset juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (Stills disease).

Other medicines and Salazopyrin Tablets

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines, including medicines without a prescription.

In particular, the following medicines as they may interact with Salazopyrin tablets:

- Any medicine for high blood sugar/diabetes
- digoxin, used to treat heart failure,
- folic acid or folate, sometimes taken during the first few weeks of pregnancy to reduce the risk of neural tube defects, e.g. Spina Bifida,
- azathioprine and mercaptopurine, drugs used to help to suppress your body's immune response in organ transplantation and certain chronic inflammations (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis).
- methotrexate, used to treat rheumatoid arthritis

If you require any medical tests it is important that you tell the doctor you are taking Salazopyrin as this medicine can affect the results of some tests.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor for advice before taking this medicine. There have been reports of diarrhoea or blood in the stools of babies of breast-feeding mothers taking Salazopyrin tablets. If this happens you must stop taking salazopyrin and see your doctor as soon as possible.

There have been reports of babies with neural tube defects born to mothers who were exposed to sulfasalazine during pregnancy, although the role of sulfasalazine in these defects has not been established.

Sperm deficiency, a cause of infertility may occur in men treated with sulfasalazine. Discontinuation of the medicine appears to reverse these effects within 2 to 3 months.

Driving and using machines

Salazopyrin tablets are unlikely to affect your ability to drive or use machinery.

3. How to take Salazopyrin Tablets

Always take this medicine exactly as your doctor or pharmacist has told you. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

The tablets should be taken with a glass of water and should be swallowed whole. Do not crush or chew the tablets.

Unless your doctor has told you otherwise, the usual doses for the following conditions are:

Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's Disease

Adults and the Elderly

• Severe Flare-Ups

2-4 tablets four times a day, with other medicines such as steroids.

Do not leave more than 8 hours between the evening and following morning dose.

• Mild/Moderate Flare-Up

2-4 tablets four times a day, but not always with other medicines.

• Maintenance dose to control your flare ups

Once the flare-up is controlled the dose is slowly reduced to 4 tablets each day. Your doctor will tell you how to reduce your dose. This lower dose will be continued indefinitely to help stop other flare-ups.

Children 2 years of age and over

Your doctor will tell you what dose your child will need to use. This will be based on your child's weight.

- The tablets should start to work in a few days. Your doctor will advise you on how long you should take these tablets for.
- If they work well, you may be using them for some time because inflammatory bowel disease may be a lifelong condition.

For Rheumatoid arthritis

• **Adults and the elderly** – Start on one tablet each day for the first week. Then increase the dose by one tablet a day each week to a maximum of 6 tablets daily as shown below:

	1 st week	2 nd week	3 rd week	4 th week
Morning		1	1	2
Evening	1	1	2	2 *

* etc to a maximum of 6 tablets per day.

Do not take more than 6 tablets a day.

- **Children** – No recommendations.

How long should you use these tablets?

Salazopyrin tablets may take some months to have a full effect, so you should keep taking them.

- You may notice some effect after a few weeks.
- When they start to work you will feel less stiffness in your joints, especially in the mornings.
- If they work well, you may be using them for some time.

Ensure that you drink adequate fluids whilst you are taking this medicine. This is to avoid problems with your kidneys.

If you take more Salazopyrin Tablets than you should

The most common symptoms of overdose are nausea and vomiting. If you experience any of these contact your nearest hospital casualty department, or tell your doctor immediately, if you have taken too many tablets (an overdose) or if a child has taken your medicine.

Please take this leaflet and these tablets with you to the hospital casualty department or to your doctor.

If you forget to take a Salazopyrin Tablet

If you forget to take a dose, just take the next dose as usual. **Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.**

If you stop taking Salazopyrin tablets

Do not stop taking this medicine or alter the dose you are currently taking without seeing your doctor first.

If you have any further questions on the use of this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

4. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Stop taking Salazopyrin Tablets and tell your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms after taking this medicine.

Although they are very rare, these symptoms can be serious.

- An allergic reaction such as sudden wheeziness, difficulty in breathing, swelling of eyelids, face or lips, rash or itching (especially affecting the whole body).
- Jaundice (yellowing of the eyes or skin).
- If you develop a severe skin rash that causes blistering, (this can affect the mouth and tongue). Potentially life-threatening skin rashes (exfoliate dermatitis, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis) have been reported very rarely (see section 2). Your doctor will stop your treatment in these cases.

If you have a serious skin condition with a rash (sometimes confined to the cheeks and bridge of the nose) peeling skin or blistering. It may be triggered or aggravated by sunlight. Should this occur, **stop taking this medicine, avoid strong sunlight and contact your doctor promptly.**

- If you are generally feeling unwell, have a fever, have pains in your joints, hives, swollen glands, rash and itching. These may be signs of a condition known as serum sickness. Your doctor will stop your treatment in these cases.
- If you are breast feeding, stop taking this medicine if you notice blood in your child's stool or diarrhoea.

Tell your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms after taking this medicine as they will stop treatment in these cases:

- If you notice any unexplained bleeding.
- If you notice bruising, fever, rash, pallor (paleness), a severe sore throat or tiredness. These may be the first signs of an abnormality of the blood, including decreases in the number of red cells, white cells or platelets. Your doctor may take regular blood samples to test for these effects.

Tests on your blood, kidneys, liver and urine

Your doctor will take blood tests to check your blood count as well as your kidney and liver function before you start your treatment and regularly during treatment. Your doctor may also test your urine for protein and blood.

Other side effects that may occur are:

Very common: may affect more than 1 in 10 people

- Indigestion, heartburn
- feeling sick (nausea)

Common: may affect up to 1 in 10 people

- dizziness
- headache
- changes in taste

- ringing in the ears
- cough
- itching of the skin
- purple discolouration's on the skin
- joint pain
- protein in urine
- fever

Uncommon: may affect up to 1 in 100 people

- depression
- shortness of breath
- abdominal pains
- diarrhoea
- being sick
- hair loss
- hives
- puffiness around the eyes and face
- yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes (jaundice)

Not known: frequency cannot be estimated from the available data

- allergic reactions (rash, itching, shock)
- inflammation of the lining of the brain
- severe diarrhoea
- other blood disorders including anaemia, enlarged glands (lymph nodes), glandular fever, persistent sore throat
- blood vessel inflammation
- loss of appetite
- hallucinations
- difficulty sleeping
- fits, jerky, uncontrolled movements
- changes in mental state, loss of memory
- changes in smell
- blood shot eyes and eye infections
- inflammation of the sac surrounding the heart (pericarditis)
- inflammation of the heart muscle (myocarditis)
- Bluish tint or paleness to skin due to poor circulation
- lung complications with breathlessness
- Inflammation of the salivary glands on either side of the face
- inflamed mouth (stomatitis)
- kidney inflammation and kidney pain, kidney stones
- liver disease (hepatitis)
- Inflammation of the pancreas – pancreatitis
- rash, reddening or blistering of the skin, eczema, swelling of the skin
- tingling, numbness, pain in hands and feet
- blood and crystals in urine
- urine or motions may become a yellow/orange colour which is normal and harmless. (See section 6)

- temporary infertility in men. Fertility returns when treatment is stopped. Normal contraception should still be used.
- dryness of the mouth and eyes
- deficiency in folic acid (may cause fatigue)

Very rarely sulfasalazine has caused permanent staining of extended wear soft contact lenses. (See section 6).

Reporting of side effects

If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via HPRAs Pharmacovigilance, Earlsfort Terrace, IRL - Dublin 2; Tel: +353 1 6764971; Fax: +353 1 6762517. Website: www.hpra.ie; E-mail: medsafety@hpra.ie. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5. How to store Salazopyrin Tablets

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Do not use Salazopyrin Tablets after the expiry date which is stated on the bottle after 'EXP'.

The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not store your tablets above 25°C. Keep the container tightly closed in order to protect from moisture.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

6. Contents of the pack and other information

What Salazopyrin Tablets contain

The active substance is sulfasalazine. Each tablet contains 500mg of sulfasalazine.

Other ingredients are maize starch, PVP (povidone), magnesium stearate and silica, colloidal anhydrous.

What Salazopyrin Tablets look like and contents of the pack

The tablets are orange/yellow in colour, and are round. They have "KPh" imprinted on one side and "101", on the other. The tablets are the colour of the medicine itself. They contain no artificial colouring.

Salazopyrin is supplied in bottles. Each bottle contains 112 tablets.

Marketing Authorisation Holder

Pfizer Healthcare Ireland, 9 Riverwalk, National Digital Park, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin 24, Ireland.

Manufacturer

Recipharm Uppsala AB, 75182 Uppsala, Sweden.

Company contact address

For further information about this medicine, please contact Medical Information at the following address:

Pfizer Limited, 9 Riverwalk, National Digital Park, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin 24, Ireland
Telephone 1800 633 363

General Advice

Because the tablets are coloured yellow they may cause your urine or motions to become a yellow/orange colour. This is normal and harmless but can stain fabric. Any Salazopyrin soiled fabric should be put in to soak.

Difficult stains may be removed with a solution of washing soda. Always test the effect of soda on a small piece of the fabric first. Then apply a mild acid such as white vinegar.

Sulfasalazine has caused permanent staining of extended wear soft contact lenses, although this happens very rarely. Daily-wear soft contact lenses and gas permeable lenses respond to standard cleaning if this happens.

Where can I get more advice about Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's Disease?

The National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC) has local groups which offer meetings, events and information for patients. They may be contacted at NACC, P.O. Box 205, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 1AB, UK.

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