

Allopurinol

Allopurinol is a medication for gout (an inflammation of the joints caused by uric acid crystals). In 2006, it was discovered to treat bipolar mania (in a sugar-pill controlled study), and those results have been replicated several times since. Allopurinol treats mania through a unique mechanism called the purigenic pathway in the brain. This pathway involves a series of neurotransmitters, including adenosine and dopamine, that regulate kindling, or cycling, of mood.

Dosing

Allopurinol is better tolerated if taken with food or milk. To prevent renal stones, drink at least 10 to 12 (8 oz) glasses of fluids daily while taking it and do not take it with high doses of vitamin C supplements. People who refrained from caffeine use responded better to allopurinol.

Typical doses used for mania are 300-600mg per day (can be taken all at once or divided twice per day).

Side effects

Allopurinol is generally safe and well tolerated. Drowsiness, nausea and diarrhea are possible.

Medical risks

Rare liver problems have been reported on it.

Allergic reactions: these are rare on allopurinol but can happen on any medication.

Discontinue allopurinol and to consult your doctor immediately at the first sign of a skin rash, painful urination, blood in the urine, irritation of the eyes, or swelling of the lips or mouth.

Interactions

There may be risks associated with use of allopurinol and dicumarol, sulfapyrazone, mercaptopurine, azathioprine, ampicillin, amoxicillin, and thiazide diuretics.

The web sites below help you check for drug interactions. You should talk with us about the information you find as many drug interactions have only a mild effect:

reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker

How to store and dispose of medication

- Keep out of the reach of children.
- Store away from heat, direct light and damp places.
- To safely dispose of unwanted pills: Do not pour in the toilet or sink (it will enter the water supply). To prevent children or pets from eating it, mix unwanted pills in a bag with a little water and inedible trash (such as coffee grounds or kitty litter) and throw in the trash.

Cost and insurance coverage

Gabapentin is available as generic form. If you are paying out-of-pocket, the lowest cost is through www.goodrx.com.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 6/28/2025