PRESCRIBING INFORMATION

1 2 **TABLOID**[®]

- 3 brand Thioguanine
- 4 40-mg Scored Tablets

5 CAUTION

- 6 TABLOID brand Thioguanine is a potent drug. It should not be used unless a diagnosis
- 7 of acute nonlymphocytic leukemia has been adequately established and the responsible

8 physician is knowledgeable in assessing response to chemotherapy.

9 **DESCRIPTION**

- 10 TABLOID brand Thioguanine was synthesized and developed by Hitchings, Elion, and
- 11 associates at the Wellcome Research Laboratories. It is one of a large series of purine analogues

12 which interfere with nucleic acid biosynthesis, and has been found active against selected human

- 13 neoplastic diseases.
- 14 Thioguanine, known chemically as 2-amino-1,7-dihydro-6*H*-purine-6-thione, is an analogue

15 of the nucleic acid constituent guanine, and is closely related structurally and functionally to

- 16 PURINETHOL[®] (mercaptopurine). Its structural formula is:
- 17



18 19

20 TABLOID brand Thioguanine is available in tablets for oral administration. Each scored

tablet contains 40 mg thioguanine and the inactive ingredients gum acacia, lactose, magnesium
 stearate, potato starch, and stearic acid.

23 CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY

Clinical studies have shown that the absorption of an oral dose of thioguanine in humans is incomplete and variable, averaging approximately 30% of the administered dose (range: 14% to 46%). Following oral administration of ³⁵S-6-thioguanine, total plasma radioactivity reached a maximum at 8 hours and declined slowly thereafter. Parent drug represented only a very small fraction of the total plasma radioactivity at any time, being virtually undetectable throughout the period of measurements.

30 The oral administration of radiolabeled thioguanine revealed only trace quantities of parent

- drug in the urine. However, a methylated metabolite, 2-amino-6-methylthiopurine (MTG),
- 32 appeared very early, rose to a maximum 6 to 8 hours after drug administration, and was still
- 33 being excreted after 12 to 22 hours. Radiolabeled sulfate appeared somewhat later than MTG but
- 34 was the principal metabolite after 8 hours. Thiouric acid and some unidentified products were

35 found in the urine in small amounts. Intravenous administration of ³⁵S-6-thioguanine disclosed a

36 median plasma half-disappearance time of 80 minutes (range: 25 to 240 minutes) when the

37 compound was given in single doses of 65 to 300 mg/m^2 . Although initial plasma levels of

38 thioguanine did correlate with the dose level, there was no correlation between the plasma

39 half-disappearance time and the dose.

40 Thioguanine is incorporated into the DNA and the RNA of human bone marrow cells. Studies

41 with intravenous 35 S-6-thioguanine have shown that the amount of thioguanine incorporated into

nucleic acids is more than 100 times higher after 5 daily doses than after a single dose. With the
5-dose schedule, from one-half to virtually all of the guanine in the residual DNA was replaced

5-dose schedule, from one-half to virtually all of the guanine in the residual DNA was replaced
 by thioguanine. Tissue distribution studies of ³⁵S-6-thioguanine in mice showed only traces of

45 radioactivity in brain after oral administration. No measurements have been made of thioguanine

46 concentrations in human cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), but observations on tissue distribution in

47 animals, together with the lack of CNS penetration by the closely related compound,

48 mercaptopurine, suggest that thioguanine does not reach therapeutic concentrations in the CSF.

49 Monitoring of plasma levels of thioguanine during therapy is of questionable value. There is

50 technical difficulty in determining plasma concentrations, which are seldom greater than 1 to

51 2 mcg/mL after a therapeutic oral dose. More significantly, thioguanine enters rapidly into the

anabolic and catabolic pathways for purines, and the active intracellular metabolites have

appreciably longer half-lives than the parent drug. The biochemical effects of a single dose of

thioguanine are evident long after the parent drug has disappeared from plasma. Because of this

rapid metabolism of thioguanine to active intracellular derivatives, hemodialysis would not be

56 expected to appreciably reduce toxicity of the drug.

57 Thioguanine competes with hypoxanthine and guanine for the enzyme hypoxanthine-guanine 58 phosphoribosyltransferase (HGPRTase) and is itself converted to 6-thioguanylic acid (TGMP).

59 This nucleotide reaches high intracellular concentrations at therapeutic doses. TGMP interferes

60 at several points with the synthesis of guanine nucleotides. It inhibits de novo purine

61 biosynthesis by pseudo-feedback inhibition of glutamine-5-phosphoribosylpyrophosphate

62 amidotransferase—the first enzyme unique to the de novo pathway for purine ribonucleotide

63 synthesis. TGMP also inhibits the conversion of inosinic acid (IMP) to xanthylic acid (XMP) by

64 competition for the enzyme IMP dehydrogenase. At one time TGMP was felt to be a significant

65 inhibitor of ATP:GMP phosphotransferase (guanylate kinase), but recent results have shown this66 not to be so.

67 Thioguanylic acid is further converted to the di- and tri-phosphates, thioguanosine

68 diphosphate (TGDP) and thioguanosine triphosphate (TGTP) (as well as their 2'-deoxyribosyl

69 analogues) by the same enzymes which metabolize guanine nucleotides. Thioguanine

70 nucleotides are incorporated into both the RNA and the DNA by phosphodiester linkages and it

has been argued that incorporation of such fraudulent bases contributes to the cytotoxicity of

72 thioguanine.

Thus, thioguanine has multiple metabolic effects and at present it is not possible to designate
 one major site of action. Its tumor inhibitory properties may be due to one or more of its effects

- on (a) feedback inhibition of de novo purine synthesis; (b) inhibition of purine nucleotide
- 76 interconversions; or (c) incorporation into the DNA and the RNA. The net consequence of its
- actions is a sequential blockade of the synthesis and utilization of the purine nucleotides.
- 78 The catabolism of thioguanine and its metabolites is complex and shows significant
- 79 differences between humans and the mouse. In both humans and mice, after oral administration
- 80 of ³⁵S-6-thioguanine, urine contains virtually no detectable intact thioguanine. While
- 81 deamination and subsequent oxidation to thiouric acid occurs only to a small extent in humans, it
- 82 is the main pathway in mice. The product of deamination by guanase, 6-thioxanthine is inactive,
- 83 having negligible antitumor activity. This pathway of thioguanine inactivation is not dependent
- 84 on the action of xanthine oxidase, and an inhibitor of that enzyme (such as allopurinol) will not
- 85 block the detoxification of thioguanine even though the inactive 6-thioxanthine is normally
- 86 further oxidized by xanthine oxidase to thiouric acid before it is eliminated. In humans,
- 87 methylation of thioguanine is much more extensive than in the mouse. The product of
- 88 methylation, 2-amino-6-methylthiopurine, is also substantially less active and less toxic than
- 89 thioguanine and its formation is likewise unaffected by the presence of allopurinol. Appreciable
- 90 amounts of inorganic sulfate are also found in both murine and human urine, presumably arising
- 91 from further metabolism of the methylated derivatives.
- 92 In some animal tumors, resistance to the effect of thioguanine correlates with the loss of
- 93 HGPRTase activity and the resulting inability to convert thioguanine to thioguanylic acid.
- 94 However, other resistance mechanisms, such as increased catabolism of TGMP by a nonspecific
- 95 phosphatase, may be operative. Although not invariable, it is usual to find cross-resistance
- 96 between thioguanine and its close analogue, PURINETHOL (mercaptopurine).

97 INDICATIONS AND USAGE

- **a) Acute Nonlymphocytic Leukemias:** TABLOID brand Thioguanine is indicated for
 remission induction and remission consolidation treatment of acute nonlymphocytic
 leukemias. However, it is not recommended for use during maintenance therapy or similar
 long term continuous treatments due to the high risk of liver toxicity (see WARNINGS and
- 102 ADVERSE REACTIONS).
- 103 The response to this agent depends upon the age of the patient (younger patients faring 104 better than older) and whether thioguanine is used in previously treated or previously
- 105 untreated patients. Reliance upon thioguanine alone is seldom justified for initial remission
- 106 induction of acute nonlymphocytic leukemias because combination chemotherapy including
- 107 thioguanine results in more frequent remission induction and longer duration of remission
- 108 than thioguanine alone.
- **b)** Other Neoplasms: TABLOID brand Thioguanine is not effective in chronic lymphocytic
- leukemia, Hodgkin's lymphoma, multiple myeloma, or solid tumors. Although thioguanine isone of several agents with activity in the treatment of the chronic phase of chronic
- 112 myelogenous leukemia, more objective responses are observed with MYLERAN[®] (busulfan),
- and therefore busulfan is usually regarded as the preferred drug.

114 CONTRAINDICATIONS

115 Thioguanine should not be used in patients whose disease has demonstrated prior resistance to

this drug. In animals and humans, there is usually complete cross-resistance between

117 PURINETHOL (mercaptopurine) and TABLOID brand Thioguanine.

118 WARNINGS

119 SINCE DRUGS USED IN CANCER CHEMOTHERAPY ARE POTENTIALLY 120 HAZARDOUS, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT ONLY PHYSICIANS EXPERIENCED WITH 121 THE RISKS OF THIOGUANINE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE NATURAL HISTORY 122 OF ACUTE NONLYMPHOCYTIC LEUKEMIAS ADMINISTER THIS DRUG. 123 THIOGUANINE IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR MAINTENANCE THERAPY OR 124 SIMILAR LONG TERM CONTINUOUS TREATMENTS DUE TO THE HIGH RISK OF 125 LIVER TOXICITY ASSOCIATED WITH VASCULAR ENDOTHELIAL DAMAGE (see 126 DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION and ADVERSE REACTIONS). This liver toxicity has 127 been observed in a high proportion of children receiving thioguanine as part of maintenance 128 therapy for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and in other conditions associated with continuous 129 use of thioguanine. This liver toxicity is particularly prevalent in males. Liver toxicity usually 130 presents as the clinical syndrome of hepatic veno-occlusive disease (hyperbilirubinaemia, tender 131 hepatomegaly, weight gain due to fluid retention, and ascites) or with signs of portal 132 hypertension (splenomegaly, thrombocytopenia, and oesophageal varices). Histopathological 133 features associated with this toxicity include hepatoportal sclerosis, nodular regenerative 134 hyperplasia, peliosis hepatis, and periportal fibrosis. 135 Thioguanine therapy should be discontinued in patients with evidence of liver toxicity as 136 reversal of signs and symptoms of liver toxicity have been reported upon withdrawal. 137 Patients must be carefully monitored (see PRECAUTIONS, Laboratory Tests). Early 138 indications of liver toxicity are signs associated with portal hypertension such as 139 thrombocytopenia out of proportion with neutropenia and splenomegaly. Elevations of liver 140 enzymes have also been reported in association with liver toxicity but do not always occur. 141 The most consistent, dose-related toxicity is bone marrow suppression. This may be 142 manifested by anemia, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, or any combination of these. Any one of these findings may also reflect progression of the underlying disease. Since thioguanine may 143 144 have a delayed effect, it is important to withdraw the medication temporarily at the first sign of 145 an abnormally large fall in any of the formed elements of the blood. 146 There are individuals with an inherited deficiency of the enzyme thiopurine methyltransferase 147 (TPMT) who may be unusually sensitive to the myelosuppressive effects of thioguanine and 148 prone to developing rapid bone marrow suppression following the initiation of treatment. 149 Substantial dosage reductions may be required to avoid the development of life-threatening bone 150 marrow suppression in these patients. Prescribers should be aware that some laboratories offer 151 testing for TPMT deficiency. Since bone marrow suppression may be associated with factors 152 other than TPMT deficiency, TPMT testing may not identify all patients at risk for severe

toxicity. Therefore, close monitoring of clinical and hematologic parameters is important. Bone

- 154 marrow suppression could be exacerbated by coadministration with drugs that inhibit TPMT,
- 155 such as olsalazine, mesalazine, or sulphasalazine.

156 It is recommended that evaluation of the hemoglobin concentration or hematocrit, total white 157 blood cell count and differential count, and quantitative platelet count be obtained frequently while the patient is on thioguanine therapy. In cases where the cause of fluctuations in the 158 159 formed elements in the peripheral blood is obscure, bone marrow examination may be useful for 160 the evaluation of marrow status. The decision to increase, decrease, continue, or discontinue a given dosage of thioguanine must be based not only on the absolute hematologic values, but also 161 162 upon the rapidity with which changes are occurring. In many instances, particularly during the 163 induction phase of acute leukemia, complete blood counts will need to be done more frequently 164 in order to evaluate the effect of the therapy. The dosage of thioguanine may need to be reduced 165 when this agent is combined with other drugs whose primary toxicity is myelosuppression. 166 Myelosuppression is often unavoidable during the induction phase of adult acute 167 nonlymphocytic leukemias if remission induction is to be successful. Whether or not this 168 demands modification or cessation of dosage depends both upon the response of the underlying 169 disease and a careful consideration of supportive facilities (granulocyte and platelet transfusions) 170 which may be available. Life-threatening infections and bleeding have been observed as 171 consequences of thioguanine-induced granulocytopenia and thrombocytopenia. 172 The effect of thioguanine on the immunocompetence of patients is unknown. 173 **Pregnancy:** Pregnancy Category D. Drugs such as thioguanine are potential mutagens and 174 teratogens. Thioguanine may cause fetal harm when administered to a pregnant woman. 175 Thioguanine has been shown to be teratogenic in rats when given in doses 5 times the human 176 dose. When given to the rat on the 4th and 5th days of gestation, 13% of surviving placentas did

- not contain fetuses, and 19% of offspring were malformed or stunted. The malformations noted
- 178 included generalized edema, cranial defects, and general skeletal hypoplasia, hydrocephalus,
- 179 ventral hernia, situs inversus, and incomplete development of the limbs. There are no adequate
- 180 and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. If this drug is used during pregnancy, or if the
- 181 patient becomes pregnant while taking the drug, the patient should be apprised of the potential 182 hazard to the fetus. Women of childbearing potential should be advised to avoid becoming
- 183 pregnant.

184 **PRECAUTIONS**

185 **General:** Although the primary toxicity of thioguanine is myelosuppression, other toxicities

- have occasionally been observed, particularly when thioguanine is used in combination withother cancer chemotherapeutic agents.
- 188 A few cases of jaundice have been reported in patients with leukemia receiving thioguanine.
- 189 Among these were 2 adult male patients and 4 pediatric patients with acute myelogenous
- 190 leukemia and an adult male with acute lymphocytic leukemia who developed hepatic
- 191 veno-occlusive disease while receiving chemotherapy for their leukemia. Six patients had

- 192 received cytarabine prior to treatment with thioguanine, and some were receiving other
- 193 chemotherapy in addition to thioguanine when they became symptomatic. While hepatic
- veno-occlusive disease has not been reported in patients treated with thioguanine alone, it is
- 195 recommended that thioguanine be withheld if there is evidence of toxic hepatitis or biliary stasis,
- and that appropriate clinical and laboratory investigations be initiated to establish the etiology of
- 197 the hepatic dysfunction. Deterioration in liver function studies during thioguanine therapy should
- 198 prompt discontinuation of treatment and a search for an explanation of the hepatotoxicity.

199 Information for Patients: Patients should be informed that the major toxicities of thioguanine

- are related to myelosuppression, hepatotoxicity, and gastrointestinal toxicity. Patients should
- 201 never be allowed to take the drug without medical supervision and should be advised to consult
- their physician if they experience fever, sore throat, jaundice, nausea, vomiting, signs of local
- infection, bleeding from any site, or symptoms suggestive of anemia. Women of childbearing
- 204 potential should be advised to avoid becoming pregnant.
- Laboratory Tests: Prescribers should be aware that some laboratories offer testing for TPMT
 deficiency (see WARNINGS).
- 207 It is advisable to monitor liver function tests (serum transaminases, alkaline phosphatase,
- 208 bilirubin) at weekly intervals when first beginning therapy and at monthly intervals thereafter. It
- 209 may be advisable to perform liver function tests more frequently in patients with known
- 210 pre-existing liver disease or in patients who are receiving thioguanine and other hepatotoxic
- 211 drugs. Patients should be instructed to discontinue thioguanine immediately if clinical jaundice is
- 212 detected (see WARNINGS).
- 213 **Drug Interactions:** There is usually complete cross-resistance between PURINETHOL
- 214 (mercaptopurine) and TABLOID brand Thioguanine.
- As there is in vitro evidence that aminosalicylate derivatives (e.g., olsalazine, mesalazine, or
- sulphasalazine) inhibit the TPMT enzyme, they should be administered with caution to patients
- 217 receiving concurrent thioguanine therapy (see WARNINGS).
- 218 **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility:** In view of its action on cellular
- 219 DNA, thioguanine is potentially mutagenic and carcinogenic, and consideration should be given
- 220 to the theoretical risk of carcinogenesis when thioguanine is administered (see WARNINGS).
- 221 **Pregnancy:** *Teratogenic Effects:* Pregnancy Category D. See WARNINGS section.

222 Nursing Mothers: It is not known whether this drug is excreted in human milk. Because of the

- 223 potential for tumorigenicity shown for thioguanine, a decision should be made whether to
- discontinue nursing or to discontinue the drug, taking into account the importance of the drug to the mother.
- 226 **Pediatric Use:** See DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION section.
- 227 Geriatric Use: Clinical studies of thioguanine did not include sufficient numbers of subjects
- aged 65 and over to determine whether they respond differently from younger subjects. Other
- 229 reported clinical experience has not identified differences in responses between the elderly and
- 230 younger patients. In general, dose selection for an elderly patient should be cautious, usually

- starting at the low end of the dosing range, reflecting the greater frequency of decreased hepatic,
- renal, or cardiac function, and of concomitant disease or other drug therapy.

233 ADVERSE REACTIONS

The most frequent adverse reaction to thioguanine is myelosuppression. The induction of complete remission of acute myelogenous leukemia usually requires combination chemotherapy in dosages which produce marrow hypoplasia. Since consolidation and maintenance of remission are also effected by multiple-drug regimens whose component agents cause myelosuppression, pancytopenia is observed in nearly all patients. Dosages and schedules must be adjusted to

- 239 prevent life-threatening cytopenias whenever these adverse reactions are observed.
- Hyperuricemia frequently occurs in patients receiving thioguanine as a consequence of rapid cell lysis accompanying the antineoplastic effect. Adverse effects can be minimized by increased
- hydration, urine alkalinization, and the prophylactic administration of a xanthine oxidase

243 inhibitor such as ZYLOPRIM[®] (allopurinol). Unlike PURINETHOL (mercaptopurine) and

- 244 IMURAN[®] (azathioprine), thioguanine may be continued in the usual dosage when allopurinol is
- 245 used conjointly to inhibit uric acid formation.
- Less frequent adverse reactions include nausea, vomiting, anorexia, and stomatitis. Intestinal
- 247 necrosis and perforation have been reported in patients who received multiple-drug
- chemotherapy including thioguanine.
- 249 Hepatic Effects: Liver toxicity associated with vascular endothelial damage has been reported
- 250 when thioguanine is used in maintenance or similar long term continuous therapy which is not
- 251 recommended (see WARNINGS and DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION). This usually
- 252 presents as the clinical syndrome of hepatic veno-occlusive disease (hyperbilirubinaemia, tender
- 253 hepatomegaly, weight gain due to fluid retention, and ascites) or signs and symptoms of portal
- 254 hypertension (splenomegaly, thrombocytopenia, and esophageal varices). Elevation of liver
- transaminases, alkaline phosphatase, and gamma glutamyl transferase and jaundice may also
- 256 occur. Histopathological features associated with this toxicity include hepatoportal sclerosis,
- 257 nodular regenerative hyperplasia, peliosis hepatis, and periportal fibrosis.
- Liver toxicity during short term cyclical therapy presents as veno-occlusive disease. Reversal of signs and symptoms of this liver toxicity has been reported upon withdrawal of short term or long term continuous therapy.
- 261 Centrilobular hepatic necrosis has been reported in a few cases; however, the reports are
- 262 confounded by the use of high doses of thioguanine, other chemotherapeutic agents, and oral
- 263 contraceptives and chronic alcohol abuse.

264OVERDOSAGE

- 265 Signs and symptoms of overdosage may be immediate, such as nausea, vomiting, malaise,
- 266 hypotension, and diaphoresis; or delayed, such as myelosuppression and azotemia. It is not
- 267 known whether thioguanine is dialyzable. Hemodialysis is thought to be of marginal use due to
- the rapid intracellular incorporation of thioguanine into active metabolites with long persistence.
- 269 The oral LD₅₀ of thioguanine was determined to be 823 mg/kg \pm 50.73 mg/kg and

- $270 \quad 740 \text{ mg/kg} \pm 45.24 \text{ mg/kg}$ for male and female rats, respectively. Symptoms of overdosage may
- 271 occur after a single dose of as little as 2.0 to 3.0 mg/kg thioguanine. As much as 35 mg/kg has
- been given in a single oral dose with reversible myelosuppression observed. There is no known
- 273 pharmacologic antagonist of thioguanine. The drug should be discontinued immediately if
- 274 unintended toxicity occurs during treatment. Severe hematologic toxicity may require supportive
- therapy with platelet transfusions for bleeding, and granulocyte transfusions and antibiotics if
- sepsis is documented. If a patient is seen immediately following an accidental overdosage of the
- drug, it may be useful to induce emesis.

278 DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

- 279 TABLOID brand Thioguanine is administered orally. The dosage which will be tolerated and
- effective varies according to the stage and type of neoplastic process being treated. Because the
- usual therapies for adult and pediatric acute nonlymphocytic leukemias involve the use of
- thioguanine with other agents in combination, physicians responsible for administering these
- therapies should be experienced in the use of cancer chemotherapy and in the chosen protocol.
- There are individuals with an inherited deficiency of the enzyme thiopurine methyltransferase
- 285 (TPMT) who may be unusually sensitive to the myelosuppressive effects of thioguanine and
- 286 prone to developing rapid bone marrow suppression following the initiation of treatment.
- Substantial dosage reductions may be required to avoid the development of life-threatening bone
 marrow suppression in these patients (see WARNINGS). Prescribers should be aware that some
 laboratories offer testing for TPMT deficiency.
- Ninety-six (59%) of 163 pediatric patients with previously untreated acute nonlymphocytic
 leukemia obtained complete remission with a multiple-drug protocol including thioguanine,
 prednisone, cytarabine, cyclophosphamide, and vincristine. Remission was maintained with daily
 thioguanine, 4-day pulses of cytarabine and cyclophosphamide, and a single dose of vincristine
- every 28 days. The median duration of remission was 11.5 months.⁸
- Fifty-three percent of previously untreated adults with acute nonlymphocytic leukemias attained remission following use of the combination of thioguanine and cytarabine according to a protocol developed at The Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. A median duration of remission of 8.8 months was achieved with the multiple-drug maintenance regimen which included thioguanine.
- 300 On those occasions when single-agent chemotherapy with thioguanine may be appropriate, 301 the usual initial dosage for pediatric patients and adults is approximately 2 mg/kg of body weight 302 per day. If, after 4 weeks on this dosage, there is no clinical improvement and no leukocyte or
- platelet depression, the dosage may be cautiously increased to 3 mg/kg/day. The total daily dose
 may be given at one time.
- 305 The dosage of thioguanine used does not depend on whether or not the patient is receiving
- 306 ZYLOPRIM (allopurinol); this is in contradistinction to the dosage reduction which is
- 307 mandatory when PURINETHOL (mercaptopurine) or IMURAN (azathioprine) is given
- 308 simultaneously with allopurinol.

- 309 Procedures for proper handling and disposal of anticancer drugs should be considered. Several
- 310 guidelines on this subject have been published.¹⁻⁸
- 311 There is no general agreement that all of the procedures recommended in the guidelines are
- 312 necessary or appropriate.

313 HOW SUPPLIED

- 314 Greenish-yellow, scored tablets containing 40 mg thioguanine, imprinted with
- 315 "WELLCOME" and "U3B" on each tablet; in bottles of 25 (NDC 0173-0880-25).
- 316 Store at 15° to 25°C (59° to 77°F) in a dry place.

317 **REFERENCES**

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