

# SULFASALZINE

## What is sulfasalazine?

- Sulfasalazine is in a class of medications called Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs, or DMARDs. DMARDs are a slow acting but effective treatment for rheumatoid arthritis and other forms of inflammatory arthritis.
- Sulfasalazine is a milder DMARD in regards to its benefit, but can be useful in mild or early cases of inflammatory arthritis. Commonly, it is used in combination with other DMARDs.

## What is the typical dose for sulfasalazine?

- Most rheumatologists will dose sulfasalazine between 1 – 3 grams per day, split into a morning and evening dose. The dose may be higher or lower based on the condition being treated and other factors related to the individual patient's disease or other medical conditions.

## How does sulfasalazine work?

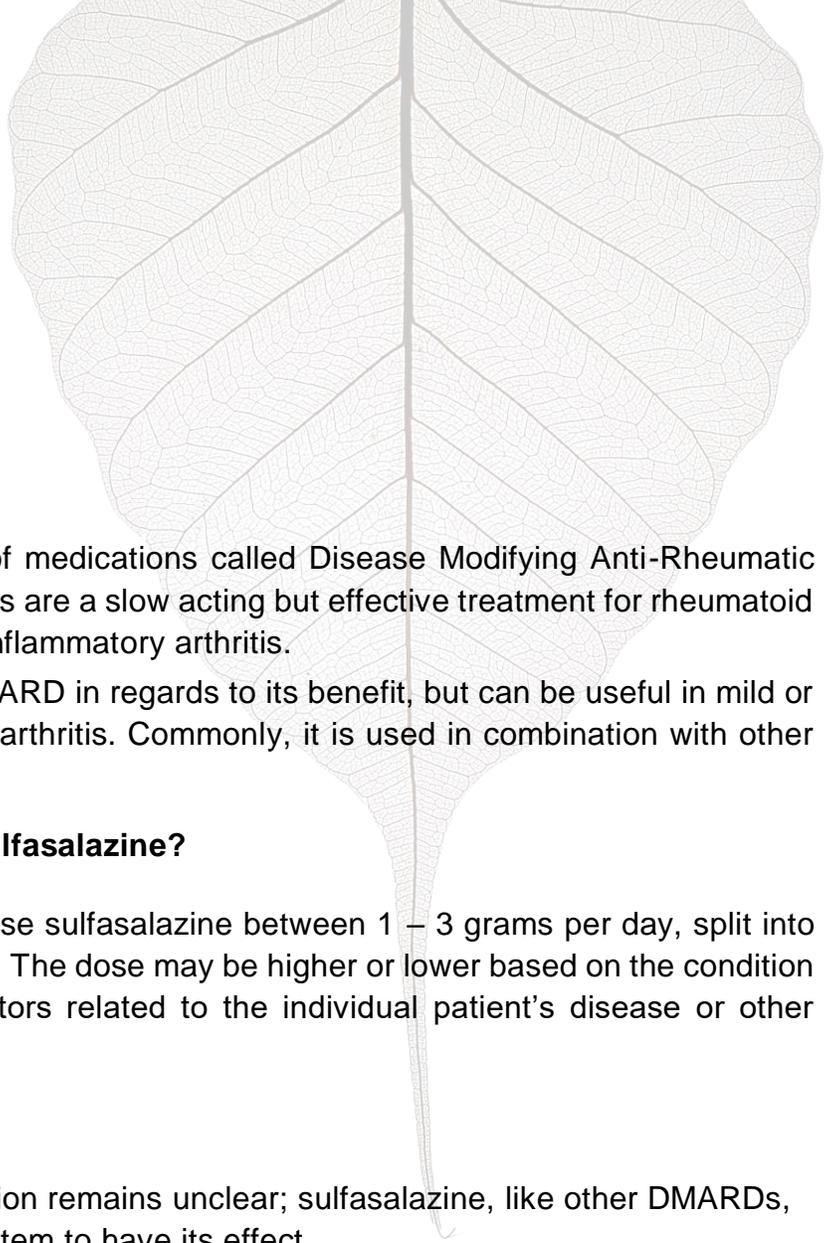
- The exact mechanism of action remains unclear; sulfasalazine, like other DMARDs, modulates the immune system to have its effect.

## How soon will I feel the effects of sulfasalazine?

- Like all DMARDs, sulfasalazine takes time to work. Most patients start to feel the positive effects of at 4-8 weeks, with maximum benefit at 3-6 months. Side effects can occur earlier.

## What are the common or serious side effects of sulfasalazine?

- Stomach upset – nausea, abdominal pain or diarrhea
- An allergic reaction, including rash
- Liver irritation
- Lower blood counts



### **How can I lower the risk of having a side effect?**

- Let your doctor know if you have a sulfa allergy – if you do, sulfasalazine is not for you
- Take your medication as directed
- Tell your doctor if you are having any problems
- Get your bloodwork done as instructed – patients on sulfasalazine need bloodwork for blood counts and liver tests anywhere between every 2 weeks to every 3 months

### **What should I do if I miss a dose?**

- If you miss your morning or evening dose, do not take double at your next scheduled dose; just skip the dose and resume your regular routine. As long as this does not happen regularly, you will likely not feel any ill effects.

### **How can I safely stop sulfasalazine?**

- It is safe to just stop sulfasalazine; you do not need to slowly reduce the dose. However, keep in mind, if you were gaining any benefit, it will usually take at least 6 weeks to lose it.

### **Recommended titration of Sulfalazine**

To avoid stomach upset, we generally suggest starting sulfasalazine as follows. Please note, your personal prescription may differ.

- Take one (1) 500mg tablet in the evening for five days.
- Then take one (1) 500 mg tablet in the morning and one (1) 500 mg tablet in the evening for five days.
- Then take one (1) 500 mg tablet in the morning and two (2) 500 mg tablets in the evening for five days.
- Then take two (2) 500 mg tablets in the morning and two (2) 500 mg tablets in the evening daily.

*For more information about Sulfasalazine, or for questions that are specific to your situation, always consult your physician.*