

# Methotrexate, azathioprine seem safe long-term for dermatitis

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(HealthDay)—Methotrexate and azathioprine appear to be effective and

safe as maintenance treatments in moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis for up to five years, according to research published online Dec. 13 in the *British Journal of Dermatology*.

Louise A.A. Gerbens, M.D., from the University of Amsterdam, and colleagues investigated the long-term effectiveness, safety, and drug survival of methotrexate and azathioprine in an open-label, five-year follow-up phase of a clinical trial. Of the 43 [patients](#) originally included in the trial, 27 completed the follow-up.

The researchers found that the mean relative reduction in the SCORing Atopic Dermatitis index was similar in the two groups: 52.8 and 53.8 percent, respectively, by descriptive analysis in the methotrexate and azathioprine groups. Over the five years, 11 serious adverse events occurred; a possible causal relationship existed for three of these. There was longer drug survival for methotrexate, but drug survival was low in both groups after five years (methotrexate, five patients; azathioprine, one patient).

"Based on this relatively small pragmatic study, [methotrexate](#) and [azathioprine](#) seem to be effective and safe as maintenance treatments in moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis up to five years," the authors write. "Few patients in both groups survive on their originally allocated drug although some discontinued due to controlled [atopic dermatitis](#)."

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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