

Fact Sheet

News from the IBD Help Center

AMINOSALICYLATES

Aminosalicylates (also known as 5-ASA) are medicines that contain 5-aminosalicylic acid and reduce inflammation in the lining of the intestines. While aminosalicylates can be used in both diseases, they are primarily used to induce and maintain remission in mild to moderate ulcerative colitis.

Other important points to know about this class of medication:

- Depending on the specific medication, they can be taken orally or rectally (with enemas or suppositories).
- They are often well-tolerated and safe and are not linked to increased risk of infections or cancer.
- Common types include sulfasalazine and mesalamine.
 - Patients with a sulfa allergy should not take sulfasalazine. Additionally, a decrease in sperm production and function in men can occur while taking sulfasalazine. However, sperm count becomes normal after the medication is discontinued.
- These medications can sometimes cause side effects like headaches or stomach pain.
- Aminosalicylates very rarely cause kidney injury. However, those with known kidney problems should carefully discuss aminosalicylate use with their doctor and kidney tests should be performed routinely.

[Animated Video](#)

[View the full list of FDA-approved aminosalicylates commonly prescribed for IBD](#)

Disclaimer: The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation provides information for educational purposes only. We encourage you to review this educational material with your healthcare professional. The Foundation does not provide medical or other healthcare opinions or services. The inclusion of another organization's resources or referral to another organization does not represent an endorsement of a particular individual, group, company, or product.

Dec 2025