

Table 1

Drug therapy for myasthenia gravis: side effects and monitoring requirements

Medication	Pretreatment screen	Monitoring	Side effects
Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors - (e.g. oral pyridostigmine) Contraindications: GI/GU obstruction		-	Diarrhoea, hypersalivation, excessive lacrimation, abdominal cramps, bradycardia, syncope, bronchospasm
Steroids (e.g. oral prednisolone)	BP, weight, U&E, fasting glucose/HbA _{1c} Assessment for osteoporosis risk and adrenal insufficiency	BP, weight every 3 months U&E, fasting glucose/HbA _{1c} every 3 months	Hypertension, diabetes, gastritis/peptic ulcer, osteopenia/osteoporosis, secondary adrenal suppression, sleep disturbance, mood change, varicella zoster virus reactivation, skin change and infection, weight gain, avascular necrosis of bone, cataract/glaucoma
Azathioprine Contraindications: TPMT homozygous, live vaccine	TPMT, FBC, U&E, Cr, eGFR, LFT, albumin	FBC, U&E, Cr, eGFR, LFT, albumin every 2 weeks until stable dose, then every month for 3 months, then every 3 months. If TPMT heterozygous then monthly LFT is recommended	GI disturbance, bone marrow suppression, renal/hepatic dysfunction, skin cancer, pancreatitis
Methotrexate Contraindications: Pregnancy, breastfeeding, concurrent infections, unexplained cytopenia and anaemia	FBC, U&E, Cr, eGFR, LFT, albumin Chest X-ray	FBC, U&E, Cr, eGFR, LFT, albumin every 2 weeks until stable dose, then every month for 3 months, then every 3 months Annual chest X-ray	GI disturbance, bone marrow suppression, renal/hepatic dysfunction, skin change, pneumonitis
Mycophenolate Contraindications: Pregnancy, breastfeeding, concurrent infections	FBC, U&E, Cr, eGFR, LFT, albumin	FBC, U&E, Cr, eGFR, LFT, albumin every 2 weeks until stable dose, then every month for 3 months, then every 3 months	GI disturbance, bone marrow suppression, renal/hepatic dysfunction, skin change, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (JC virus infection)

TPMT = thiopurine S-methyltransferase FBC = full blood count U&E = urea & electrolytes Cr = creatinine LFT = liver function tests eGFR = estimated glomerular filtration rate