

Azithromycin 250mg and 500mg Capsules and Tablets

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their symptoms are the same as yours.
- If any of the side effects gets serious, or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor or pharmacist.

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1. What Azithromycin is and what it is used for

Azithromycin is one of a group of antibiotics called macrolides. It is used to treat and prevent chest infections. You are taking Azithromycin to prevent chest infections.

Azithromycin has been studied for this use in many patients and found to be safe and very effective. Therefore, although the manufacturer cannot promote the use in prevention of chest

infections, it is a recognised preventative regime for bronchiectasis and COPD and the consultant looking after you is happy to recommend its use.

2. Before you take Azithromycin

Do not take Azithromycin if:

- you are allergic to Azithromycin or any other macrolide antibiotic such as Erythromycin or Clarithromycin. An allergic reaction may cause skin rash or wheezing
- you are taking any ergot derivatives such as ergotamine (used to treat migraine) as these medicines should not be taken together with Azithromycin

Your consultant needs to know before you take Azithromycin if you have or have had any of the following conditions: kidney problems, heart conditions or liver problems: your doctor may need to monitor your liver function

Tell your doctor immediately if you feel your heart beating in your chest or have an abnormal heartbeat, or get dizzy or faint or suffer from any muscle weakness when taking Azithromycin.

If you develop diarrhoea or loose stools during treatment, tell your doctor. Do not take any medicine to treat your diarrhoea without first checking with your doctor. If your diarrhoea continues, please inform your doctor.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor before taking Azithromycin, if you are taking any of the medicines listed below:

- ergot or ergotamine, warfarin or any similar medicine to prevent blood clots, ciclosporin, antacids, digoxin, terfenadine.

You should always tell your doctor if you are taking or have recently taken any other medicines including those obtained without a prescription.

Taking Azithromycin with food and drink

You should take Azithromycin either 1 hour before a meal or 2 hours after a meal.

3. How to take Azithromycin

Always take Azithromycin exactly as your consultant has told you. You should check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure. The capsules should be swallowed whole.

The usual dose in adults is 250mg or 500mg taken, once a day three times per week (usually on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays).

The label on the pack will tell you which dose you should take. If you are still not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Always continue with the treatment even if you feel better.

If you forget to take Azithromycin take it as soon as you can. Take your next dose at the right time. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

4. Possible side effects

Like all medicines Azithromycin can cause side effects although not everybody gets them.

The most common side effects that occur when taking Azithromycin are listed below. These may go away as your body adjusts to the medicine. Tell your doctor if any of these side effects continue to bother you.

Very common side effects (occurring in at least 1 in 10 people taking Azithromycin):

- stomach cramps, feeling sick, diarrhoea, wind

Common side effects (likely to occur in less than 1 in 10 people) are as follows: dizziness, headache, numbness or pins and needles, being sick, indigestion, loss of appetite, taste and visual disturbances, deafness, skin rash and /or itching, joint pain, low numbers of lymphocytes (type of white blood cells), higher number of eosinophils (type of white blood cells), low blood bicarbonate, tiredness or weakness.

If any of the side effects get serious, or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor or pharmacist.

5. How to store Azithromycin

Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children. This medicine does not require any special storage conditions. Medicines should not be disposed of via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of medicines no longer required.

6. When to stop taking Azithromycin

Local Chest Consultants have advised that patients stop taking Azithromycin whilst being treated for a flare-up (an exacerbation) and to restart after the acute course of antibiotics.

References are available upon request from:

medicines.information@mkhospital.nhs.uk

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Patient Information

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Department

Preventative Use
of
Azithromycin
In
Bronchiectasis
and COPD