

Azithromycin for bacterial infections

Consumer Information Sheet

This leaflet answers some common questions about azithromycin. This information sheet does not replace Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved Consumer Medicines Information. Please ask your doctor or pharmacist for a full Consumer Medicines Information. If you have any concerns about this medicine, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

DO NOT give this medicine to anyone who is allergic to medicines containing azithromycin or macrolides. Some of the signs of an allergic reaction may include skin rash, itching or hives; swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing; wheezing or shortness of breath.

Azithromycin is available as:

Tablets: 500 mg

Liquid medicines: 200 mg per 5 mL

What is azithromycin used for?

Azithromycin is used to treat a range of infections caused by bacteria. It is an antibiotic which belongs to a group of medicines called macrolide antibiotics.

It is important that your child takes this medicine in the way that your doctor has told you to so that the medicine kills the harmful bacteria and gets rid of the infection.

Before your child starts to take azithromycin:

Tell your child's doctor if your child:

- Has ever had an allergic reaction to any antibiotics or other medications in the past.
- Has a condition called myasthenia gravis (a neuromuscular condition).
- Has any medical conditions or health problems.
- Is taking any other medications.

How to give azithromycin:

Azithromycin is usually given once a day, usually in the morning. Give the dose at about the same time each day.

Azithromycin can be taken with or without food.



Liquid medicines:

- Give oral liquid as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. The amount (dose) is specific for your child and the type of infection. The directions on how to give this medication will be shown on the medicine label.
- **Shake the liquid well** then measure out the right amount using an oral syringe.
- Make sure the whole dose is swallowed each time.



Tablets:

- Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, cordial, milk or juice.
- Tablets can also be halved and/or crushed and mixed with a small amount of yoghurt or apple puree if required. It is recommended to **wear a mask and gloves if crushing the tablet**. Crushing the tablet **should never be undertaken by anyone with an allergy to azithromycin**.

When should the medicine start working?

Your child should start to get better after taking the medicine for 2 days. If your child has a fever (temperature above 38°C), that still does not get better, or they become more unwell, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

It is important that your child has the **whole course of medicine that has been prescribed**. This means that they must take the medicine for the number of days that the doctor has told them to or the number of days that is written on the medicine label. Do not stop early even if your child feels better.

What if my child vomits after a dose?

If your child has a large vomit less than 30 minutes after having a dose of azithromycin, give them the same dose again.

If your child has a large vomit more than 30 minutes after having a dose of azithromycin, you **do not** need to give the dose again. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If it is almost time to give the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give the next dose when you are meant to.

Otherwise, give the dose as soon as you remember and then go back to giving the medicine as you would normally.

Do not give a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects). Azithromycin is generally a safe drug however sometimes it has serious side effects.

Side-effects you must do something about:

If your child gets a skin rash or itching, is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, they may be allergic to azithromycin. **Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away on 000 (24-hour service).**

Contact your doctor as soon as possible if your child:

- Has diarrhoea that goes on for more than 4 days or if it is severe and watery, or contains blood.

Other side-effects you need to know about:

- Your child may have diarrhoea, stomach pains or feel sick when they first start to take azithromycin. Taking azithromycin with food may help to reduce this. Encourage your child to drink water to replace fluid lost through diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- Your child may have a mild skin rash / itch.
- Your child may get headaches when taking

azithromycin and may feel sleepy or have a funny taste in their mouth. These side-effects should go away when the medication is finished. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if you are concerned.

- You may see white patches inside your child's mouth and throat, and girls may get itching or soreness around the vagina. This is caused by a fungal infection called thrush. If you think your child may have thrush, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. Tell your child's doctor if you notice anything unusual and are concerned.

Where should I keep this medicine?

Most azithromycin oral liquid are kept at room temperature, in a cool dry place (below 30°C). Store as per package instructions.

Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.

Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Liquid medicines:

- Most azithromycin oral liquids have a short expiry once prepared by the pharmacist. The bottle will be labelled to indicate the expiry date. Discard any unused medication at your local pharmacy.
- For storage requirements check the product details or ask your pharmacist

Important information

Only give the antibiotic to the child it was prescribed for. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as it could do harm.

Keep medicines out of reach of children.

In case of overdose or poisoning, contact:

**Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26
(24-hour service)**

For more information

SA Pharmacy Medicines Information Service
Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
Telephone: (08) 8161 7555



This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.



Health
Southern Adelaide
Local Health Network