

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I forget a dose?

Don't worry, just take the next dose as scheduled

Should Azithromycin be stopped for surgery?

It commonly shouldn't need to be stopped, if you have any questions please check with your respiratory/ surgical doctor

Does Azithromycin alter fertility or pregnancy?

There are no known effects regarding fertility and it does appear to be safe during pregnancy. We recommend a careful discussion concerning the advantages and disadvantages of continuing Azithromycin in order to make a balanced judgement concerning stopping or continuing.

Can I drink alcohol while on azithromycin?

There is no significant interaction between Azithromycin and alcohol.

Respiratory Nurse Specialists are available Monday to Friday 8.30-4.30 on 01225 825344. Please leave a message and we will contact you.

References

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1672237> – BAT Study
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(12\)60953-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(12)60953-2/fulltext) - EMBRACE Study

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Azithromycin In Bronchiectasis

Patient Information Leaflet

What is Azithromycin?

Azithromycin is an antibiotic used to treat infections caused by bacteria. It is from a group of antibiotics called 'macrolides'. However, it also has a useful anti-inflammatory property, helping to reduce the number of flare ups and bronchiectasis symptoms.

Why have I been prescribed Azithromycin?

Azithromycin is a treatment used to prevent chest infections and help with the symptoms of bronchiectasis. It helps to both kill bacteria and to reduce inflammation in the airway or breathing pipes. We use Azithromycin 'outside of the product licence', but two clinical studies have shown it to be of significant benefit (see references below).

What do you need to know before taking it?

1. If you have had an allergic reaction to any macrolide antibiotic, such as Clarithromycin or Erythromycin, in the past you should not take Azithromycin.
2. We will check some blood tests, a sputum sample and an ECG before starting this treatment.
3. There are potential side effects, as with all medications. Please see the list below describing possible problems.

How long will you be taking Azithromycin?

Initially for six months and then reviewed. If the benefit is significant, we may recommend this long term.

What dose do I need?

Usually 250mg or 500mg tablets three times a week (Mon, Wed & Fri).

Flare ups or exacerbations

Please let your doctor know if you are suffering from symptoms of a chest infection. You may still need to complete an appropriate different course of antibiotics if necessary. However, you should also **continue to take** your Azithromycin as this is for its anti-inflammatory effect.

Possible side effects

- Azithromycin is usually well tolerated, with less than 1/10 patients reporting any side effects.
- Less than 1 in 10 of patients report tummy upset, diarrhoea, constipation, dizziness, headaches or a rash.
- Less than 1 in 100 of patients report hearing impairment, with the first symptom being ringing in the ears. If you experience this, please stop taking Azithromycin straight away. Hearing changes usually improve.
- Less than 1 in 1000 of patients develop abnormal heart rhythms or liver inflammation, hence checking an ECG and blood tests.
- There is an increased risk of an unusual infection called non-tuberculous mycobacterial (NTM). Therefore we check sputum first.

Which medication may interact with Azithromycin?

A short list of common medications include:

- Theophylline and aminophylline
- Warfarin
- Digoxin
- Amiodarone

Azithromycin can still be used depending on the situation but caution is required and we may suggest an alternative combination. There are many other drugs that interact. However, the impact is often minor. Please let your doctor know all the medications you are taking. We may need increased monitoring and/or dose adjustment.