

Azithromycin

for close contacts of Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

What is whooping cough?

Whooping cough, or Pertussis, is a very contagious (easy to catch) disease that affects the airway (nose and throat). It can cause severe coughing attacks and in young children a high pitched intake of breath (or whoop). Babies younger than 6 months old are at most risk for serious illness and may need to go to hospital. Please refer to the NT Health Pertussis fact sheet.

If you have been in close contact with someone with whooping cough early in their illness, you are a contact. Watch out for symptoms and see your doctor if you get a new cough.

What is Azithromycin?

It is an antibiotic to prevent whooping cough symptoms and stop it from spreading, given to people who are considered contacts of whooping cough.

Preventive antibiotics are recommended for all those who are:

- ✔ Babies younger than 6 months of age
- ✔ May spread whooping cough to young babies (even if they are fully immunised)
 - household contacts including pregnant parents/carers
 - health care staff
 - childcare employees
 - children attending childcare

Before you take this medicine, tell your doctor:

- ✔ If you have an allergy to azithromycin
- ✔ If you have any medical condition, particularly heart, liver, kidney disease, diabetes or cystic fibrosis
- ✔ If you are taking any medicines (including those that don't require prescriptions)
- ✔ If you might be pregnant or if you are breastfeeding

How is Azithromycin given to me?

The course is 5 days.

- ✔ The dose for adults is one 500mg tablet on the first day and then half a tablet (250mg) daily for the next 4 days.
- ✔ Children are prescribed a dose according to their weight and it can be given as a syrup. Once completing 5 days of antibiotics, you cannot spread the infection anymore.
- ✔ Azithromycin can be taken with or without food, at the same time each day. It is important not to take it 2-3 hours before or after taking medicine for reflux.

What are the side effects of Azithromycin?

While uncommon, mild side effects may occur in some people such as diarrhoea, nausea, or abdominal pain. Headaches, thrush, infections or an allergic reaction can occur rarely.

An allergic reaction to Ciprofloxacin includes:

- ✔ facial swelling
- ✔ breathing difficulties
- ✔ any rash

If at anytime you feel unwell after taking this medication, you should seek immediate medical attention.

For a full list of side effects, please see the Azithromycin Consumer Medicine Information document.

For more information contact the Centre for Disease Control in your region.

Alice Springs : 8951 7540
 Darwin : 8922 8044
 Katherine : 8973 9049
 Nhulunbuy : 8987 0357
 Tennant Creek : 8962 4259

Centre for Disease Control contacts | NT Health



If you need an interpreter we can book one for you.

