Plumb's Drug Handouts

Azithromycin

(*ay-zith-roe-**my**-sin*)

Key Information

- Azithromycin is an antibiotic used to treat some bacterial and parasitic infections.
- May be given with or without food. Giving with food may help prevent stomach upset.
- Common side effects include vomiting, diarrhea, or decreased appetite.
- It is important to finish the entire course of treatment, even if your animal starts feeling better.

Note: The purpose of this information sheet is to answer commonly asked questions. It does not contain all available information for this medication and is not a substitute for medical advice provided by your veterinary healthcare team.

Description	• Macrolide antibiotic • Available as tablets and oral suspensions
Other common names	*Zithromax*, *Zmax*
Uses	This medication is not FDA-approved specifically for animals, but it is approved for use in humans. At the discretion of your veterinarian, this medication may be used extra-label for: • Treatment of some bacterial and parasitic infections in dogs, cats, and other species
Before this medication is given	No medication is 100% safe in all patients. Discuss with your veterinarian: • Any other medications or supplements your animal is taking • Any conditions or diseases your animal currently has or has had in the past • Any side effects your animal has had to medications in the past • The risks of using this medication if your animal is pregnant or nursing
Warnings for animals	Do **not** use: • In animals that are allergic to it or other macrolide antibiotics, such as erythromycin Use with **caution** in: • Animals with liver problems • Animals with heart problems • Small mammals such as rabbits and guinea pigs Certain medications are not allowed in some animal competitions. Check rules and regulations when your animal is taking a medication.
Warnings for humans	• Wash your hands after handling any medication. • Wear gloves or avoid handling if you are allergic to macrolide antibiotics
How do I give this medication?	• May be given with or without food. Giving with food may help prevent stomach upset. • Shake liquids well before each dose. • For liquid medications, measure with an oral syringe, medicine cup, or dosing spoon. Do not use household measuring devices. *Give exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. Always follow the instructions on the prescription label.*
Side effects	**Common** – contact your veterinarian if any of these signs are severe, continue to occur, or worsen over time: • Vomiting • Diarrhea • Decreased appetite

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	Severe – stop the medication and contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs: • Fever, rashes, or trouble breathing. These may be signs of a medication allergy
How will I know it's working?	• Your animal should start feeling better within 1 to 2 days. *Contact your veterinary clinic if your animal's signs worsen or do not improve.*
How long will the medication effects last?	• This medication will stop working within 1 to 2 days of the last dose, depending on the species and condition being treated. • It may last longer if your animal has reduced liver function.
How long do I give it for?	This medication can be given for different lengths of time. Give it for as long as your veterinarian tells you. You may need to refill the prescription.
Overdose	If you witness or suspect an overdose, call your veterinarian or an animal-specific poison control center (consultation fee applies): • **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**: (888) 426-4435 • **Pet Poison Helpline**: (855) 764-7661 *Have the product or label with you if possible.*
Missed dose	In most cases, if you miss a dose: • Give it when you remember, then return to the regular dosing schedule. If it is close to the time for the next dose: • Skip the missed dose. • Give the next dose at the next scheduled time. • Continue the regular dosing schedule. *If you are unsure, call your veterinary clinic. Do not double-up doses or give extra doses.*
Storage	• Store tablets and suspensions in the original container at room temperature. • Keep out of reach of children and animals.
Disposal	Discard oral suspensions 10 days after mixing with water. Do **not** flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. Options for disposing of unused or expired medications include: • Drug take-back sites: This is preferred whenever possible. To find a site near you, contact your local law enforcement or waste management authorities. • Home disposal: Mix the medication in with coffee grounds or kitty litter, seal the mixture in a plastic bag, and throw it away in the trash. *Do **not** save leftover medication or give it to others to use.*
Questions?	Talk to your veterinarian.

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