

Zithromax (azithromycin) basics

Treats bacterial infections. Zithromax (azithromycin) is good for treating many bacterial infections and is available in generic form. However, it may cause headache, dizziness, or rash.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.

	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Long term
Zithromax (azithromycin) Drug effectiveness					
Possible side effects	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Long term
Diarrhea 5% chance					
Nausea 3% chance					
Abdominal pain 3% chance					
Vomiting†					
Upset stomach†					
Allergic reaction†					

† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Take the immediate release liquid and tablet with or without food. Take with food if it causes an upset stomach.
- If you are taking the extended-release liquid medication, shake well before measuring the dose and take on an empty stomach.
- Do not take antacids within 2 hours of this medication.
- Store at room temperature. Do not refrigerate or freeze.
- Zithromax liquid comes in powder form which can be mixed at the pharmacy or at home. Follow instructions on the bottle for mixing. After mixing, the medicine in the liquid is good for 10 days.

Risks and warnings

Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Diarrhea caused by bacteria (*Clostridium difficile*)

As with all antibiotics, Zithromax (azithromycin) can cause diarrhea. You can try preventing this by taking probiotics in the form of yogurt, supplements or drinks a few hours after you take the medication. In some rare cases, some people get a very bad form of diarrhea caused by bacteria called *C. difficile*. The symptoms include watery or bloody stool, stomach pain and cramps, and fever. It can start weeks or even months after taking Zithromax (azithromycin). If you have any of these symptoms, do not try to treat them on your own and call your doctor right away.

Liver damage

In rare cases, Zithromax (azithromycin) can cause liver damage which results in hospitalization or possibly death. Talk to your doctor if you notice unusual nausea/vomiting, fever, pain in your abdomen, loss of appetite, yellowing of your skin or eyes, or dark colored urine.

Myasthenia gravis

If you've had myasthenia gravis, ask your doctor for alternatives to Zithromax (azithromycin). Taking Zithromax (azithromycin) can worsen myasthenia gravis symptoms such as muscle weakness and difficulty breathing.