Azithromycin

(Azyter*, Clamelle*, Zedbac*, Zithromax*) POM

- **Formulations**

Oral: 250 mg, 500 mg capsules and tablets; 200 mg/5 ml suspension (reconstitute with water); 30 mg azithromycin + 35 mg rifampicin capsules (veterinary special). Injectable: 500 mg powder for reconstitution.**VSP**

- **Action**

Time-dependent macrolide antibacterial that binds to the 50S bacterial ribosome (like erythromycin), inhibiting peptide bond formation. Azithromycin has a longer tissue half-life than erythromycin, shows better oral absorption and is better tolerated in humans.

- **Use**
    - Alternative to penicillin in allergic individuals as it has a similar, although not identical, antibacterial spectrum. It is active against Gram-positive cocci (some *Staphylococcus* species are resistant), Gram-positive bacilli, some Gram-negative bacilli (*Haemophilus*, *Pasteurella*), mycobacteria, obligate anaerobes, *Chlamydia*, *Mycoplasma* and *Toxoplasma*. Some strains of *Actinomyces*, *Nocardia* and *Rickettsia* are also inhibited. Most strains of the Enterobacteriaceae (*Pseudomonas*, *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella*) are resistant. Useful in the management of respiratory tract, mild to moderate skin and soft tissue, and non-tubercular mycobacterial infections. Is used to treat chlamydiosis in birds, but it has not proved possible to eliminate *Chlamydia felis* from chronically infected cats using azithromycin, even with once daily administration.
    - Also reported for the treatment of small *Babesia* spp. (e.g *Babesia gibsoni*) and *Cytauxzoon felis*.
    - In addition to its antimicrobial activity, it has been reported for use in reducing gingival hyperplasia secondary to ciclosporin administration in cases where cessation of treatment is not possible.

Little information is available on the use of this drug in animals and drug pharmacokinetics have not been studied closely in the dog and cat. Doses are empirical and subject to change as experience with the drug is gained. More work is needed to optimize the clinically effective dose rate. Azithromycin activity is enhanced in an alkaline pH; administer on an empty stomach.

More +

- **DOSES**

Classified as category C (Caution) by the EMA. See Appendix for Guidelines for responsible antibiotic use.

- **Dogs** 5–10 mg/kg p.o. q24h. May increase dosing interval to q48h after 3–5 days of treatment; for small *Babesia* spp.: 10mg/kg q24h for 10 days, in combination with atovaquone.

- **Cats** Various regimens are suggested: 5–10 mg/kg p.o. q24h for 3–5 days; 5 mg/kg p.o. q24h for 2 days then every 3–5 days up to a total of 5 doses; for upper respiratory tract disease: 5–10 mg/kg p.o. q24h for 5 days then q72h. Specialist texts should be consulted.