

Clarithromycin for bacterial infections

This leaflet is about the use of the antibiotic clarithromycin for the treatment of bacterial infections.



This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

If your child has ever had a reaction to any antibiotic, check with your doctor that your child can have clarithromycin **before** giving it.

Name of drug

Clarithromycin

Common brands: Klaricid

Modified release tablets: Mycifor XL, Klaricid XL

Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

It is important that your child takes this medicine in the way that your doctor has told you to so that it kills the harmful bacteria and gets rid of the infection.

What is clarithromycin available as?

- **Tablets:** 250 mg or 500 mg
- **Liquid medicine:** 125 mg or 250 mg in 5 mL
- **Granules:** 250 mg (per sachet)


When should I give clarithromycin?

Clarithromycin is usually given **twice** each day, once in the morning and once in the evening. Ideally, these times are 10–12 hours apart, for example some time between 7 and 8 am, and between 7 and 8 pm.

Give the medicine at about the same times each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of clarithromycin (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

 **It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.**

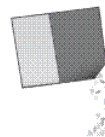
How should I give it?



Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablets.



Liquid medicine: Shake the medicine well. Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or a medicine spoon. You can get these from your pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.



Granules: Sprinkle or stir the granules into a small amount of soft food (e.g. yogurt) or a small drink. Your child should then swallow the food or drink straight away, without chewing. Make sure that they take it all.

When should the medicine start working?

Your child should start to get better after taking the medicine for 2 or 3 days. It is important that they **take the whole course** of the medicine that has been prescribed. **Do not stop early.**

If your child has a fever (temperature above 38°C) that does not get better, or they become more unwell, contact your doctor.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of clarithromycin, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after having a dose of clarithromycin, you **do not** need to give them another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If you remember up to 4 hours after you should have given a dose, give your child the missed dose. For example, if you usually give a dose at about 7 am, you can give the missed dose at any time up to 11 am. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I give too much?

Clarithromycin is normally a safe drug. It is unlikely to cause any problems if you give an extra dose by mistake.


If you think you may have given your child too much clarithromycin, contact your doctor or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet). Have the medicine container or packet with you if you telephone for advice.


Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Side-effects are rare with clarithromycin and do not usually last long. They will get better after a day or two as your child's body gets used to the medicine, and should go away when the treatment course is finished.

Side-effects you must do something about

 If your child is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, or they develop a rash, they may be allergic to clarithromycin. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance **straight away**.

 If your child complains of a fast or skipping heartbeat or pain in their chest, contact your doctor straight away.

Important things to know about taking antibiotics

- It is important that your child **completes the course** of antibiotic. This means that they must take the medicine for the number of days that the doctor has told you to, or until all of the medicine has been taken. If you stop giving the antibiotic too soon, the bacteria that are left will start to multiply again, and may cause another infection. There is also a risk that these bacteria will be 'resistant' to the first antibiotic. This means that it might not work next time, and your child might need a different antibiotic, which might not work as well or cause more side-effects.
- Children are sometimes sick (vomit) or get diarrhoea when taking antibiotics. Encourage them to drink water to replace the fluid they have lost.
- **Do not** give your child any medicine to stop the diarrhoea unless your doctor has told you to.

- Try to give the medicine at about the same times each day, to help you remember, and to make sure that there is the right amount of medicine in your child's body to kill the bacteria.
- Only give this medicine to your child for their current infection.
- **Never save** medicine for future illnesses. Give old or unused antibiotics to your pharmacist to dispose of.
- Only give the antibiotic to the child for whom it was prescribed. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.



If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor for advice.

- Antibiotics only kill bacteria; they do not kill viruses. This means that they do not work against colds, sore throats, flu or other infections that are caused by viruses. Your doctor will not prescribe antibiotics for these illnesses.

Other side-effects you need to know about

- Some children get diarrhoea, stomach pains and may feel sick or be sick (vomit) when they first start taking clarithromycin. Giving the medicine with some food or milk may help. The box above gives advice on what to do.
- Contact your doctor if your child has diarrhoea that goes on for more than 4 days or if it is severe and watery or contains blood.
- Your child may say that things smell or taste unusual or unpleasant.
- They may get headaches.
- They may get sore lips or tongue, and the teeth or tongue may change colour.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard>.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as clarithromycin?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Clarithromycin should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving clarithromycin.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep this medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about clarithromycin and about other medicines used to treat infections.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111

Tel 111

www.nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111

www.nhs24.com

Wales: NHS Direct

Tel 111

www.111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk