

Clarithromycin

About This Medicine

Clarithromycin is an antibiotic and is often used to treat bacterial infections. It is sometimes used in combination to treat *Helicobacter pylori* and can be used in combination with other medicines to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth).

Possible Side Effects

- Nausea
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Pain in your abdomen
- Changes in the way food and drinks taste

Note: *Not all possible side effects are included above.*

Warnings and Precautions

- Changes in your liver function, which can cause liver failure and be life-threatening
- Abnormal heartbeat and/or abnormal electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG), which can be life-threatening
- Severe diarrhea that can be caused by an infection called *Clostridium difficile*, which can be life-threatening
- Worsening symptoms of myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune disorder, in patients who have this disease.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some patients, and may be life-threatening. Signs of allergic reaction to this medicine may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this medicine. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- Severe allergic skin reaction. You may develop blisters on your skin that are filled with fluid or a severe red rash all over your body that may be painful.

Note: *Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.*

Important Information

- This medicine may cause dizziness, vertigo, confusion and disorientation, which may impair your ability to drive or use machinery. Use caution and talk to your doctor and/or nurse about any precautions you may need to take.
- Tell your doctor if you have a history of myasthenia gravis as this medicine may worsen and/or cause new symptoms of myasthenia gravis.
- Tell your doctor if you have a history of heart disease.

How to Take Your Medicine

- For regular release clarithromycin tablets or suspension (liquid), swallow the medicine with or without food. It can also be taken with milk.
- For extended-release clarithromycin tablets, swallow the medicine with food. Do not chew, break or crush the extended-release tablets.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, take your next dose at the regular time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time, instead, continue with your regular dosing schedule and contact your physician.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container, with lid tightly closed, at room temperature. Do not refrigerate suspension.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- Taking good care of your mouth may help food taste better and improve your appetite.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- This medicine may interact with grapefruit and grapefruit juice. Talk to your doctor as this could make side effects worse.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known medicine interactions with clarithromycin. Also, check with



your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

- This medicine may interact with St. John's Wort and may lower the levels of the medicine in your body, which can make it less effective.
- There are known interactions of clarithromycin with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your doctor what precautions you should take.
- Tell you are doctor if you are taking cholesterol-lowering medicine such as simvastatin as there are known interactions of clarithromycin with some of these medicines.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Droopy eyelid and mouth
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Severe muscle weakness in your arms and/or legs
- Trouble speaking
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Changes in the way food and drink taste that is causing a loss of appetite
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Blood in your stool
- Abdominal pain that does not go away
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. Serious allergic reactions require immediate emergency treatment. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and fatigue (low energy, feeling weak)
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- If you think you may be pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this medicine because this medicine may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.



- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this medicine. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children.

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