

**Gonorrhoea Pack (Azithromycin + Suprax)**  
**Additional patient guidance for use in treating gonorrhoea**

- This leaflet contains important information on using Azithromycin and Suprax (Cefixime) to treat gonorrhoea.
- Before using Azithromycin and Suprax for this purpose, you will need to read both this leaflet *and* the patient information leaflet already provided with each of the two medicines. You can access these online at the following links:

Azithromycin: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3034/pil>

Suprax: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/5534/pil>

- Do not throw this leaflet away, as you may need to refer to it again.

**Patients should note that the oral antibiotics in the Gonorrhoea Pack are no longer the first line treatment for gonorrhoea infections. The preferred option for gonorrhoea infections is a Ceftriaxone injection given in addition to Azithromycin (given as an oral tablet). This treatment can only be administered in person by a healthcare practitioner at a GUM clinic.**

**Because of the small but increasing chance of gonococcal resistance associated with their use, the oral antibiotics in the Gonorrhoea Pack are provided only to those patients who refuse or are unable to tolerate the injection.**

In this leaflet you will find the following additional information not already supplied in the Azithromycin and Suprax (Cefixime) patient information leaflets:

1. What gonorrhoea is
2. How the antibiotics in this pack work to treat gonorrhoea
3. What you need to know before you take gonorrhoea pack
4. How to take medicines in the gonorrhoea pack
5. Further information

**1. What gonorrhoea is**

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection. It can be passed from one person to another through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex. It can also be passed on through the use of shared sex toys.

The infection is caused by a type of bacteria, and it does not always cause symptoms. In fact, roughly 10% of men and 50% women won't get any symptoms at all.

When someone does get symptoms, they may notice:

- pain when going to the toilet
- pain in the lower stomach
- discharge from the vagina or penis which might be white, yellow or green
- bleeding when you aren't on your period, or heavier periods (women)
- swelling in the foreskin or pain in the testicles (men)

Someone can also get the infection in their eyes, rectum or throat.

If someone thinks they may have come into contact with the infection, getting tested is important, even if they don't have any symptoms. If gonorrhoea isn't treated, it can cause serious health problems, including loss of fertility.

## **2. How the antibiotics in this pack work to treat gonorrhoea**

Gonorrhoea is caused by a bacteria. Antibiotic medicines work by killing the bacteria responsible for the infection. They do this by stopping the bacteria from producing certain kinds of proteins, which they need to grow and multiply.

Once the antibiotics have done this, the bacteria is no longer able to spread, and the body's immune system kills what remains of the bacteria. The symptoms of infection then begin to clear up.

This pack contains two different types of antibiotic tablet. Over time, some types of bacteria evolve and become resistant to antibiotics. Because some strains of gonorrhoea have developed a resistance to certain antibiotics, two different types of antibiotic are issued to make sure the infection is properly treated.

## **3. What you need to know before you take gonorrhoea pack**

Please read the guidance provided in the patient information leaflets supplied with your medicines.

You will need to tell your doctor if you have any medical conditions or are taking any other medicines, so that your doctor can make sure the antibiotics in the gonorrhoea pack are safe for you to take.

- **Ideally, you should get tested and treated for gonorrhoea in person at a specialist GUM clinic.**
- **BASHH Guidelines specify that the preferred treatment in the UK for gonorrhoea is an injection (Ceftriaxone) given alongside a tablet (Azithromycin).\*** The injection can only be given by a healthcare professional, and will usually be administered in a GUM clinic.
- **The antibiotics in Gonorrhea Pack are both oral tablets. They are recommended as a second-line option in those cases where someone either cannot take or refuses to have the Ceftriaxone injection.**
- **Oral antibiotics may also be given to treat gonorrhoea if someone with a positive test result is either unwilling or unable to attend a GUM clinic.**
- **BASHH guidelines published in 2011 specify that a 1g dose of Azithromycin should be issued when used in conjunction with Cefixime for the treatment of gonorrhoea. This treatment contains a 2g dose of Azithromycin, based on the recommendations of European guidelines published a year later in 2012.**

If you experience any serious side effects or notice anything unusual after taking this medicine, seek medical advice right away.

#### **4. How to take medicines in the gonorrhoea pack**

You should always take your medicine as directed by your doctor.

For gonorrhoea infections, you will be advised to take:

- 400mg (2 x 200mg tablets) of Suprax
- and 2g (4 x 500mg tablets) of Azithromycin.

Swallow tablets whole with water.

Do not drink alcohol before taking these tablets, or for 48 hours afterwards.

It is important that you take the tablets as prescribed. If you do not take the treatment as directed by your doctor, your infection may not respond to the medicine.

These antibiotics have been issued to treat you specifically. You should never give antibiotics to anyone else.

In addition to the above, you will still need to read the user guidelines given in the patient information leaflets that come with the two medicines.

## **5. Further information**

**You should not have sex until three weeks after you and your partner(s) have completed treatment. You should wait at least three weeks before being re-tested following treatment.**

Testing facilities can be found at your GP surgery, or your local GUM clinic. To find your nearest GUM clinic, visit:

<http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/STI-testing-and-treatment/LocationSearch/736>

Or you can buy a testing kit online from [Treated.com](http://Treated.com).

**It is important that you notify any recent sexual partners of your gonorrhoea diagnosis so that they can get tested for possible infection. If necessary, your primary care physician or GUM clinic can help you do this.**

You can find more information on safe sex practices on the NHS website at <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/stis/pages/sexualactivitiesandrisk.aspx>.

If you are unsure about anything you have read in this leaflet or any aspect of your treatment, please speak to your doctor.

\* - <https://cks.nice.org.uk/gonorrhoea>