

# Azithromycin Treatment for Severe Asthma

## WHAT IS AZITHROMYCIN?

### A MACROLIDE ANTIBIOTIC THAT IS:



**Anti-bacterial** and **Anti-inflammatory**

## WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF TREATMENT ON SEVERE ASTHMA?

- Reduced asthma attacks
- Improved quality of life
- Reduced bronchitis episodes
- Improved asthma symptom scores

*Improvements in lung function (e.g. FEV<sub>1</sub>) have also been reported*

## WHO SHOULD MACROLIDES BE USED IN?

In patients with severe asthma who fail to achieve symptom control treatment should be initiated in specialist care

*Note: The use of macrolide antibiotics for the treatment of asthma is off-label in Australia*

## TREATMENT APPROACH:

### 1 SCREENING

**Patients should be excluded based on the following:**

- Prolonged QTc interval (>480 ms)
- Cardiac arrhythmia
- Caution should be considered in people with hearing loss



### 2 DOSING



**500 mg  
(3x per week)**

OR

**250 mg daily**



**For up to 12-months**

### 3 MONITORING

**DIARRHOEA:** Increased rates were observed in a clinical trial (34% vs. 19% placebo). If diarrhoea occurs the dose can be adjusted and a probiotic co-administered.

**RHABDOMYOLYSIS:** Interactions have been reported between macrolides and statins. Discontinue use if myopathy symptoms occur.

**ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE:** Emergence of resistant pathogens may occur. Breaks in chronic therapy may be considered to reduce resistance. *Note: detection of antibiotic resistance should not automatically result in treatment discontinuation*