

# Antimicrobials - Handle with Care

## Azithromycin update: change to Northern Health automatic duration for IV formulation

NH Policy currently states that the automatic stop duration for azithromycin is 5 days, which is an exception from the general 7 day stop for all other systemic antimicrobials. This 5 day duration is based on the oral dosing schedule of 500mg day 1 then 250 mg on days 2 to 5, which achieves the studied 1500 mg total therapy dose for its most commonly used indication of community acquired pneumonia (note that a 500 mg po x 3 day regimen would also be acceptable, as previously posted, due to a long half-life via either oral or IV route of 68 to 72 hours in adults). When administered via the IV route the dosing standard is 500 mg, which given over 5 days is a higher total therapy. For most patient cases this is unnecessary, in fact extension beyond 1500 mg would typically only be necessary in select ICU patients. It has been suggested and agreed upon by the AMS Medical lead, AMS program coordinator, ICU pharmacist at UHNBC and UHNBC pharmacist group that a 3 day automatic stop for IV azithromycin would be sufficient for majority of cases and in the event a patient requires extension of this therapy the stop order report can be utilized to extend therapy.

Please note that the Regional order set for Management of Community Acquired Pneumonia in Adults has also been updated to reflect this change.

For more information regarding this topic, please contact either Alicia Rahier the program lead pharmacist or Dr. Abu Hamour, Medical Lead.

For more information regarding the information listed above or about Northern Health's Antimicrobial Stewardship program, contact Alicia Rahier the program coordinator/lead pharmacist at 250-565-5956 or via email [alicia.rahier@northernhealth.ca](mailto:alicia.rahier@northernhealth.ca)

### **Bottom line for NH Prescribers:**

**The automatic stop duration for azithromycin IV will now be 3 days. If an extension is deemed appropriate after patient re-assessment, a new order will be required.**



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