British Equine Veterinary Association

Client Information Leaflet

Erythromycin, Azithromycin or Clarithromycin with Rifampicin

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- **Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.**
- **Please ask your vet if you have any further questions.**
- **This medicine is being prescribed for your horse. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same and could result in inadvertent contravention of Horse Passport legislation**

These medicines have been prescribed or given for you foal. Although they are not licensed for use in these species it is being used under the prescribing cascade.

What are these medicines? These medicines are antibiotic drugs used for the treatment of pneumonia or other diseases caused by Rhodococcus equi in foals. Erythromycin, Azithromycin and clarithromycin are macrolide antibiotics. They are not used in adult horses.

Why has my horse been prescribed these medicines? These antibiotics are used together to treat specific conditions of the foal, where other medicines are known to be ineffective.

How should I store these medicine? **For safety, all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.** There are no special storage requirements. **It is important to prevent inadvertent administration of even small amounts of these medicines to adult horses. You should remove and wash feed buckets and wash any excess medicine from the foals face.**

What should I do if I run out of these medicines? Usually your vet will dispense the correct amount of the product. If you run out, you should contact your veterinary surgeon to complete the course as soon as possible.

What should I do if I miss a dose? If a dose is missed just give the next dose at the normal time. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose.

What should I do if I accidentally overdose my horse? Contact your vet. Large doses can cause diarrhoea that can be fatal in exceptional cases.

If my horse is better what should I do with the remaining medicine? As with all antibiotics it is important that the full course of antibiotics is completed. Stopping early may leave some bacteria present at the site of infection that will regrow, leading to recurrence of disease that may be less susceptible (resistant) to this or other antibiotics.

If my horse is not improving what should I do? Contact your veterinary surgeon who will review whether this is the correct drug for your horse and may consider alternative / concurrent therapies.

Can my horse take this medicine along with other medicines? Tell your veterinary surgeon if you are giving your horse any other medicines.

What do I need to record in my horse's passport? This medicine is not authorised for use in horses intended for human consumption, but are described as *essential medicines* for the treatment of horses. This means that it can be used in animals destined for human consumption as long as a six-month withdrawal period is observed. If your horse's passport has not be signed to permanently exclude it from the human food chain you veterinary surgeon must record its use in the horses passport.

What are the possible side effects of these medicines in my horse?
The most common side effect with these drugs is mild to moderate diarrhoea. If this occurs you should contact your veterinary surgeon to discuss this further. Rifampin can cause a harmless orange or red discolouration of the foals urine.

Foals being treated with erythromycin occasionally develop hyperthermia (an excessively high temperature). If this occurs you should contact your vet immediately.

Macrolides are generally not used in horses over one year of age since severe, potentially fatal, diarrhoea can occur. Occasionally mares of foals being treated with these medicines will develop diarrhoea due to inadvertent intake when the mare grooms its foal. If diarrhoea is observed in the mare you should **contact your vet immediately.**

What should I do if a person accidentally takes this medicine? If a person accidentally takes this medicine you should contact NHS direct (telephone 111) or take the person to a local hospital taking the package insert leaflet and the package with you.

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The prescribing cascade: This medicine is authorised for use in human patients or other animal species and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), for use in horses. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why

they are prescribing this drug for your pet. If you do not agree to the use of this medicine in your horse you should discuss this with your veterinary surgeon.

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