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On Drugs and Therapeutics

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IN BRIEF

Telithromycin Hepatotoxicity

Telithromycin (*Ketek*) is an oral erythromycin derivative FDA-approved for treatment of mild to moderate community-acquired pneumonia, exacerbations of chronic bronchitis and acute bacterial sinusitis ([Med Lett Drugs Ther 2004; 46:66](#)). It is generally considered an alternative antibiotic because of its cost, potential for adverse effects including visual disturbances, exacerbation of myasthenia gravis, hepatotoxicity and drug interactions. A recent report ([Ann Intern Med 2006; 144:415](#)) described serious hepatotoxicity probably related to telithromycin in three patients, including one who died and another who needed a liver transplant. Many other oral antibiotics are available for treatment of community-acquired pneumonia, exacerbations of chronic bronchitis and acute bacterial sinusitis in adults ([Med Lett Drugs Ther 2005; 47:78](#)).

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