



*May 22, 2023*

## **Health Advisory: Penicillin G Benzathine (Bicillin L-A) Shortage**

*This advisory is intended for OB/GYN, family and general practice, internal medicine, STD specialists, emergency medicine, and urgent care providers. Please distribute as appropriate.*

### Situational Update: Bicillin L-A

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have received reports that some clinical providers and public health departments are currently unable to procure enough penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A) to treat syphilis cases in their jurisdictions due to a manufacturing backlog. The manufacturer anticipates the issues will be resolved by the fourth quarter of 2023.

**Bicillin L-A is the only acceptable treatment for pregnant persons infected with or exposed to syphilis and should be prioritized for babies exposed to syphilis in utero. Additionally, all persons capable of pregnancy diagnosed with syphilis should receive Bicillin L-A.**

Among non-pregnant adults, doxycycline 100mg po BID x 14 days is an acceptable alternative for those with primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis and for those who have been exposed to a patient with infectious syphilis. Doxycycline 100mg po BID x 28 days is an acceptable alternative for those with late latent syphilis.

Other intramuscular formulations of penicillin (e.g. Bicillin C-R) are not acceptable alternatives for the treatment of syphilis.

### Actions Requested of Clinicians in San Mateo County

1. **Prioritize penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A) for pregnant people and people capable of pregnancy with syphilis infection or exposure**, as well as for non-pregnant syphilis patients with primary, secondary or early latent syphilis who are unlikely to adhere to a multiday doxycycline regimen, or who have a contraindication to doxycycline.





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2. **Contact SMC STD Control** (650) 573-2346 if you are having trouble obtaining Bicillin L-A.
3. **If your stocks of Bicillin L-A are low**, consider doxycycline for non-pregnant adults who are likely to adhere to a multiday regimen.
4. **Conserve Bicillin L-A by using alternative drugs** to treat group A strep pharyngitis and for primary rheumatic fever prophylaxis, e.g. penicillin V, amoxicillin and azithromycin.

Additional Resources: Bicillin L-A

- [CDC announcement about Bicillin L-A shortage](#)
- [CDC STI Treatment Guidelines for Syphilis](#)

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