

BICILLIN® L-A (penicillin G benzathine) Shortage and Prioritization

Situation: In April 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) listed Bicillin® L-A on their drug shortage webpages, anticipating a resolution after two months. However, additional manufacturing delays and a recent tornado that damaged a Pfizer manufacturing facility have resulted in a longer recovery timeframe, with expected stock out imminent. **Bicillin® L-A is the recommended, first line treatment for syphilis, and the only recommended treatment for syphilis in pregnancy.**

TDH Recommendations:

The following patients should receive Bicillin® L-A as outlined in the most current STD Treatment Guidelines:

- Pregnant women exposed to or diagnosed with syphilis.
- Babies with congenital syphilis.
- Patients with contraindications to doxycycline (e.g., anaphylaxis, Stevens Johnson syndrome).

Among non-pregnant adults:

- Doxycycline 100 mg orally BID x 14 days is an acceptable alternative for those with primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis.
- Doxycycline 100 mg orally BID x 28 days is an acceptable alternative for those with late latent syphilis or syphilis of unknown duration.

Additional considerations for prioritization:

- Bicillin® L-A is the only recommended treatment regimen for syphilis in pregnancy; no alternative exists. To maintain current stock, avoid using Benzathine penicillin G for treatment of other infectious diseases (e.g., streptococcal pharyngitis) where other effective antimicrobials are available.
- Additional doses to treat early syphilis does not enhance efficacy, including among patients living with HIV.
- Clinicians with questions about syphilis clinical management can contact the on-line National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers (NNPTC) STD Clinical Consultation Network (<https://www.stdccn.org>) or a local ID specialist.

Resources:

- CDC Email: Clinical Reminders during Bicillin® L-A Shortage (attached)
- 2021 CDC STI treatment guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/syphilis.htm>
- <https://www.ashp.org/drug-shortages/current-shortages/drug-shortage-detail.aspx?id=909&loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/std/funding/docs/STD-PCHD-TA-Notes-11c-Benzathine-Penicillin-G.pdf>
- Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers Consult: [NNPTC Online Consultation](#)
- Request laboratory and treatment history using the TN Syphilis History Request Form: <https://redcap.link/syphilis>

For more information contact Steffany.cavallo@tn.gov or call 615-532-8370.