



HEALTH ADVISORY  
UPDATE #2 PENICILLIN G BENZATHINE SHORTAGE SEPT 6, 2023

**SITUATION:**

This health advisory is to provide updates on the ongoing, nationwide shortage of penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin® L-A), first reported on April 26, 2023. Alameda County released a health advisory [April 28](#) on this shortage. Pfizer is the sole supplier of Bicillin® L-A, and currently anticipates that the shortage will not be resolved until quarter 2 of 2024. Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) has not been informed of shortages, but healthcare systems in San Francisco have reported critical shortages of penicillin G benzathine.

**Bicillin® L-A is the only acceptable treatment for pregnant people infected with or exposed to syphilis and should be prioritized for babies exposed to syphilis in utero.**

Given the ongoing shortages, it is important supplies be used to treat patients for whom there is no alternative regimen or those unable to adhere to a multiday course of oral treatment. Other intramuscular formulations of penicillin (e.g. Bicillin® C-R) **are not** acceptable alternatives for the treatment of syphilis. Doxycycline is an acceptable alternative for non-pregnant adults with primary, secondary, or early and late latent syphilis, and for those who have been exposed to a patient with infectious syphilis.

**ACTIONS REQUESTED OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS:**

**1. Use penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin® L-A) for:**

- Pregnant people with syphilis infection or exposure
- Infants exposed to syphilis in utero
- Non-pregnant adults with syphilis of any stage who have a contraindication to doxycycline
- Non-pregnant adults with syphilis of any stage who are unlikely to adhere to a multi-day doxycycline regimen, for example persons without a safe space to store medications, or who have shown difficulties in adhering to other medications.

**2. Use doxycycline for syphilis treatment in non-pregnant adults and those without other reasons to use Bicillin® L-A**

- Use doxycycline 100 mg PO BID x 14 days for the treatment of primary, secondary and early latent syphilis, and for those exposed to syphilis.
- Use doxycycline 100 mg PO BID x 28 days for the treatment of non-pregnant adults with late latent syphilis.

**3. Use alternative antimicrobials** to treat group A strep pharyngitis and for primary rheumatic fever prophylaxis, e.g., penicillin V, amoxicillin, and azithromycin.

**4. Monitor your inventory of penicillin G benzathine and report if you do not have supplies** to treat prioritized persons. Please notify ACPHD [SexualHealth@acgov.org](mailto:SexualHealth@acgov.org) of shortage(s) or low inventories of Bicillin® L-A. Requests for Bicillin® L-A should provide the purpose, and be submitted to ACPHD [SexualHealth@acgov.org](mailto:SexualHealth@acgov.org).

**RESOURCES:**

[SFDPH Updated Health Advisory Penicillin G Benzathine \(Bicillin L-A\) Shortage](#)

[CDC announcements about the Bicillin L-A Shortage](#)

[CDC Clinical Reminders during Bicillin L-A Shortage](#)

[FDA on Bicillin L-A Shortage](#)

[Health Advisory: Bicillin L-A \(Benzathine Penicillin G\) Shortage \(ca.gov\)](#)

[Benzathine penicillin G \(Bicillin L-A\) Shortage Health Advisory April 28](#)