



Situation

On April 16, 2023, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) announced a [Penicillin G Benzathine shortage](#) (Bicillin L-A® or “BIC”).

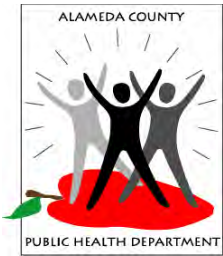
Benzathine penicillin G (Bicillin L-A®) is the recommended treatment for syphilis and the only recommended treatment for pregnant women infected with, or exposed to, syphilis. Other formulations of penicillin, including Bicillin C-R, are not acceptable alternatives to Bicillin L-A® for syphilis treatment. The manufacturer anticipates the issue will be resolved in the next two months.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS:

1. Refrain from using Bicillin L-A® for treatment of infectious diseases where there are alternatives (e.g., streptococcal pharyngitis).
2. Prioritize use of Bicillin L-A® for treatment of pregnant women and babies.
3. Adhere to the recommended dosing regimen of 2.4 million units of Bicillin L-A® intramuscularly for the treatment of primary, secondary, and early latent syphilis. Additional doses to treat early syphilis do not enhance efficacy, including in patients with HIV infection.
4. Doxycycline may be considered as an alternative treatment for syphilis in non-pregnant adults with penicillin allergy.
 - Doxycycline 100mg PO BID for 2 weeks (for early syphilis) or for 4 weeks (for late latent or syphilis of unknown duration).
5. Continue to report syphilis diagnoses to the Alameda County Public Health Department; details can be found on the [Disease Reporting and Control website](#).
6. CDPH has a limited stockpile of Bicillin L-A® which can be requested for situations with no alternative treatment options (pregnant people, infants with congenital syphilis or individuals unable to take doxycycline). Requests for Bicillin L-A® should provide the purpose, and be submitted to BOTH stdcb@cdph.ca.gov AND the Bay Area Region Capacity Coordinator cary.escovedo@cdph.ca.gov.
7. Please notify CDPH STD Control Branch (stdcb@cdph.ca.gov) and ACPHD SexualHealth@acgov.org of any shortage(s) or low inventories of Bicillin L-A® so we can continue to monitor the situation.

Additional Resources:

Information on syphilis treatment and clinical management can be found in the [CDC STD Treatment Guidelines](#). CDC does not recommend any changes to these treatment guidelines for patients with syphilis during the current shortage. Additional information on the availability of penicillin G benzathine and updates are [here](#).



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
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Clinical questions related to the treatment of syphilis may be directed to the California Department of Public Health STD Control Branch Clinician Warm Line at (510) 620-3400 or by an online consult to the national STD Clinical Consultation Network at www.stdccn.org.

If you have questions about the Bicillin L-A® shortage or accessing Bicillin L-A® please contact the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) STD Control and Prevention Unit (510) 267-3220 or SexualHealth@acgov.org.