

Health Advisory

Recommendations for Use of Bicillin L-A to Treat Congenital Syphilis May 24, 2023

SUMMARY POINTS

- Prioritize the use of Bicillin L-A® to treat pregnant people and babies with congenital syphilis.
- Providers who are having difficulty obtaining Bicillin L-A® for priority patients should contact the STD Control Program at 215-685-6737 to arrange for appropriate treatment.

In April, the CDC received reports that some STD programs and clinics nationwide were unable to procure enough penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A®) – the first-line recommended treatment for syphilis.

The manufacturer anticipates the issue will be resolved in the next two months. In the meantime, they are working closely with CDC and FDA to address urgent requests. Initial local inventory assessments indicate that most larger institutions have adequate Bicillin L-A, but some smaller institutions locally have reported difficulty in procuring.

PDPH recommends:

- Institutions review their current levels of Bicillin inventory.
- Providers continue to follow CDC's treatment recommendations.
- Penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A®) is the only recommended treatment for pregnant people infected or exposed to syphilis. Doxycycline 100mg PO BID for two (2) weeks (for early syphilis) or four (4) weeks (for late latent or syphilis of unknown duration) should be used as an alternative for the treatment of nonpregnant people.
- Prioritize the use of Bicillin L-A® to treat pregnant people and babies with congenital syphilis.
- If inventory allows, treat patients with primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis who are unlikely to be adherent to oral regimen.
- Notify the PDPH STD Control Program (215-685-6737) of any shortage or low inventories of Bicillin L-A® in your practice so we can continue to monitor this situation and provide situational awareness to CDC, FDA, and Pfizer.

Providers who cannot obtain penicillin for priority patients should contact the STD Control Program at 215-685-6737 to arrange for appropriate treatment.