

The FDA has listed penicillin G benzathine injectable suspension products (Bicillin L-A®) on their drug shortage webpage, noting limited supply due to increased demand. Bicillin L-A® is the first-line recommended treatment for syphilis and the only recommended treatment option for some patients.

This is of considerable concern to California as the state continues to see significant increases in syphilis, including syphilis in pregnant persons and congenital syphilis in infants.

During this time, programs should continue to follow CDPH and CDC's treatment recommendations with the following prioritization:

1. Prioritize Bicillin® L-A for pregnant people with syphilis infection (or exposure) as well as for infants, as indicated, to prevent and/or treat congenital syphilis
2. Prioritize Bicillin® L-A for patients with contraindications or severe allergies/reactions to doxycycline, such as anaphylaxis, hemolytic anemia, Stevens Johnson syndrome.
3. Prescribe doxycycline 100mg PO BID for 2 weeks (for early syphilis) or for 4 weeks (for late latent or syphilis of unknown duration) as an alternative for the treatment of non-pregnant people.
4. Conserve Bicillin® L-A by using alternative drugs for the treatment of infectious diseases (e.g., streptococcal pharyngitis) where oral medications or other effective antimicrobials are available.

Contact your Humboldt County Health Department's Emergency Preparedness if you are experiencing a Bicillin® L-A shortage and/or having trouble obtaining the medication.

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Related Websites

FDA Drug Shortages: <https://rb.gy/7creb>

CDPH Treatment Recommendation: <https://rb.gy/zsr5a>

CDC Treatment Recommendation: <https://rb.gy/m1mi4>