

Extended Pfizer Bicillin® L-A Shortage Alert

Summary and Action Items

The purpose of this Health Alert is to:

1. Alert providers on FDA approval to import Lentocilin® during the Bicillin® L-A shortage.
2. Remind providers to prioritize Bicillin® L-A for pregnant individuals and certain at-risk neonates.
3. Review available alternatives and ordering information.

Background

In July of 2025, Pfizer recalled multiple lot numbers of Benzathine Penicillin G (Bicillin® L-A) due to failure to meet visual inspection standards. Subsequently in 2025, due to the discontinuation of impacted lot numbers, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a Drug Shortage Alert. This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a [Dear Colleague](#) letter with updates on the shortage. The [shortage was forecasted](#) by the FDA to continue through the third quarter of 2026 and the United States continues to have limited supply of Bicillin® L-A.

This shortage poses a significant public health concern. Bicillin® L-A is the only recommended treatment for syphilis in pregnancy. Over the past five years, the rate of congenital syphilis in the United States has surged by 203%. According to 2023 CDC surveillance data, Illinois ranked 22nd in the nation for congenital syphilis rates.

Recommendations

Bicillin® L-A remains the first-line treatment for all syphilis cases and the only option for certain patient populations. In light of the shortage, programs should take the following steps.

- Take inventory:
 - Monitor local supply of Bicillin® L-A and [determine the local pattern of use to forecast need](#).
 - Continue contacting distributors to procure Bicillin® L-A as appropriate. [Contact Pfizer to request product](#) for individual pregnant patients or neonates with syphilis through their Medical Request Process if distributors have no supply.
- Follow [CDC STI Treatment Guidelines](#) for staging and management of syphilis cases. Additional staging resources include [the National STD Curriculum](#) (NSTDC) and [the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of Sexually Transmitted Infections/New York City STD Prevention Training Center](#).
- **Prioritize** Bicillin® L-A for:
 - Pregnant patients. Refer to the [Perinatal Syphilis Warmline](#) (800.439.4079) as needed for clinical consultation, coordination of record searches for prior syphilis testing and treatment, and assistance with [mandatory case reporting](#). Additional resources for consultation include

Illinois Department of Public Health

[the online National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers \(NNPTC\) STD Clinical Consultation Network.](#)

- Neonates who meet the case criteria for [“possible” congenital syphilis.](#)
- Individuals who have already initiated treatment with a 3-week course of Bicillin® L-A.
- Use alternatives when appropriate:
 - For non-pregnant patients, doxycycline may be used as an alternative.
 - 100 mg PO twice daily for 14 days for early syphilis.
 - 100 mg PO twice daily for 28 days for late latent syphilis or syphilis of unknown duration.
 - Consider involving antimicrobial stewardship leaders to help institute systems-level approaches to limit the use of Bicillin® L-A and encourage the use of alternative effective antimicrobials for treatment of other infections.
 - For patients with acute rheumatic fever or rheumatic heart disease who need prophylaxis to reduce the likelihood of recurrent streptococcal infections and acute rheumatic fever episodes, twice daily administration of oral penicillin V is a preferred option as detailed in [Clinical Guidance for Acute Rheumatic Fever | Group A Strep | CDC](#) during this shortage.
- Notify IDPH of any shortage of BPG so we can continue to monitor this situation.

If a non-pregnant patient requires Bicillin® L-A (e.g., doxycycline allergy), assess whether treatment can be obtained (either Lentocilin® or Bicillin® L-A) at an alternate site in a timely manner including a nearby [FQHC](#) or [Free and Charitable Clinic](#).

Health care providers are encouraged to act promptly and coordinate with their [local public health](#) officials to ensure priority access for at-risk populations.

Bicillin® L-A Current Distribution Process:

All Bicillin® L-A 1.2 million unit and 2.4-million-unit formulations are available exclusively through Pfizer’s Medical Request process. Instructions and request forms are available in Pfizer’s official supply update letter: [Pfizer Availability Update for Bicillin® L-A \(July 2025\)](#). Pfizer will allocate its limited inventory based on clinical necessity. To obtain product, health care providers must complete a [Medical request form](#) on a per-patient basis. Fulfillment will be limited to requests for patients with confirmed cases of congenital syphilis or those at risk for congenital syphilis. Submit completed forms to: PISupplyContinuity@pfizer.com.

Alternatives

If warranted due to the drug shortage, health care providers may consider use of Lentocilin® or alternate treatment with doxycycline.

Ordering Lentocilin®

To address the shortages of Bicillin® L-A in the United States, Mark Cuban Cost Plus Drug Company in coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are temporarily importing Lentocilin® (Benzathine Benzylpenicillin Tetrahydrate) Powder and diluent for suspension for injection, 1,200,000 units into the United States. Benzathine benzylpenicillin is another name for Penicillin G benzathine.

To place an order, either through an account in the [CostPlus marketplace](#) or directly by credit card.

For more information, review the [FDA Healthcare Provider Letter](#) regarding Lentocilin®.

Contact

IDPH Sexually Transmitted Infections Section at 217.782.2747

Target Audience

Local Health Departments, Local EMAs, Hospital/ Clinics, Providers, and FQHCs, ED personnel, infectious disease staff, medical staff, nurses/nursing directors, pharmacy staff, health care coalition, correctional/detention facilities, women's health, pediatricians, IL licensed pharmacists

IDPH CD Leads and Staff, IDPH RHOs, IDPH OPR Leads, IDPH ERCs, IDPH Regional EMS Coordinators, IDPH Health Care Associated Infection Team, HFS, State Board of Health, and IDPH HAN Team

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March 12, 2026

Resources

[CDC STI Treatment Guidelines: Syphilis](#)

[Perinatal Syphilis Warmline](#)

[Perinatal Syphilis/Congenital Syphilis Rapid Reporting Tool for Providers](#)

[IDPH STI Section Syphilis Disease and Condition Page](#)

[IDPH Syphilis Action Toolkit](#)