



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: March 26, 2024

From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #3: Extension of Bicillin® L-A Shortage

- The County of San Diego HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Branch (HSHB) previously alerted providers of a national shortage of **long-acting penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin® L-A)** with estimated recovery of supplies in the second quarter of 2024. **The expected recovery time has been extended to the fourth quarter of 2024.**
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has allowed the temporary importation of Extencilline® (benzathine benzylpenicillin) to address ongoing shortages of Bicillin® L-A.
- HSHB continues to recommend prioritization of Bicillin® L-A and Extencilline® to treat pregnant people and infants exposed to syphilis, as well as cases or contacts with contraindications to doxycycline.

Situation and Background

On April 25, 2023, the County of San Diego released a health advisory informing providers of a **national shortage of long-acting penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin® L-A)** and providing recommendations for prioritization of the medication to maximize supply. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have announced further extension of the time of supply recovery from the second quarter to the **fourth quarter of 2024.**

The FDA has allowed the temporary importation of **Extencilline® (benzathine benzylpenicillin)** to address the ongoing shortage of Bicillin® L-A in the United States. Extencilline® is a form of penicillin G benzathine that can be used interchangeably with Bicillin® L-A for treatment of syphilis. However, there are important differences between Extencilline® and Bicillin® L-A. Extencilline® is supplied as a powder for reconstitution, in contrast to the disposable prefilled syringes of Bicillin® L-A. After reconstitution, the volume of Extencilline® is higher than that of Bicillin® L-A. Since Extencilline® contains soy phospholipids, it may cause hypersensitivity reactions, such as urticaria and anaphylactic shock, in patients with a history of allergy to soybeans.

Actions Recommended

Given the continued uncertainty regarding the availability of Bicillin® L-A, the County of San Diego recommends the following:

1. **Prioritize** Bicillin® L-A and, if necessary, Extencilline® for **pregnant people** with syphilis infection or exposure.
2. **Prioritize** Bicillin® L-A and, if necessary, Extencilline® for **patients with contraindications to doxycycline** (e.g., anaphylaxis, hemolytic anemia, Stevens Johnson syndrome) with syphilis infection or exposure.
3. **Prioritize** Bicillin® L-A **over** Extencilline® for infants exposed to syphilis in utero due to the larger volumes required for Extencilline® injections. Extencilline® may be used in infants if Bicillin® L-A is not available.
4. **Conserve** Bicillin® L-A and Extencilline® by using alternative drugs for the treatment of primary, secondary, early and late latent syphilis, and syphilis of unknown duration in non-pregnant adults, as well as for other infectious diseases (e.g., streptococcal pharyngitis) where other effective antimicrobials are available.

Alternative syphilis treatment regimens for **non-pregnant** adults include:

- a. Doxycycline 100 mg orally BID for 14 days for primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis.

- b. Doxycycline 100 mg orally BID x 28 days for late latent syphilis or syphilis of unknown duration.
5. If using Extencilline®, **review** information regarding reconstitution, storage, and administration, as they differ in some respects to those of Bicillin® L-A. **Screen** clients for history of allergy to soybeans prior to administration of Extencilline®.
 6. **Contact** the HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Branch if you have trouble obtaining Bicillin L-A® or Extencilline® by calling (619) 692-8501. For clinical questions related to treatment of syphilis, call (619) 609-3245. Both numbers are monitored Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm, excluding County holidays.

Resources

- [Health Advisory: Extension of Long-Acting Benzathine Penicillin G \(Bicillin® L-A\) Shortage \(CDPH\) – March 18, 2024](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: Powdered Benzathine Benzylpenicillin \(Extencilline®\) for the Treatment of Syphilis \(CDPH\) – January 26, 2024](#)
- [Extencilline® Dear Healthcare Provider Letter \(Laboratoires Delbort\)- November 21, 2023](#)
- [Extencilline Clinical Information Resource \(CDC\)](#)
- [Health Advisory: Potential Access Challenges to Bicillin® L-A \(CAHAN San Diego\) – April 25, 2023](#)
- [Health Advisory Update #2: Bicillin® L-A Shortage](#)
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration Drug Shortage Webpage – Bicillin® L-A](#)
- [Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines, 2021 \(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\)](#)

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Branch

Phone (for providers, M-F 8AM-5PM): (619) 692-8501 (lab/treatment histories and staging/treatment recommendations), (619) 609-3245 (clinical consultations for challenging cases); Fax: (619) 692-8541

E-mail: cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov

Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>

Public Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>