

Being Treated with Benzathine Penicillin G Long-Acting (Bicillin L-A[®]) for Syphilis

Your Medicine

This medicine is given by injection. The number of injections you get depends on what stage of syphilis you have. Your nurse or doctor will talk to you about this. Injections are once a week and you may need to come in for up to 3 weeks.

Is there anyone that can't take penicillin?

Talk to your nurse or doctor **before** you get penicillin if you've had a reaction to penicillin, amoxicillin, or a cephalosporin medicine (Keflex[®], Ceclor[®]).

Depending on the type of reaction you had, your healthcare provider will help you decide if you can have this treatment.

What are the side effects of the medicine?

Penicillin may cause an upset stomach, nausea, and vomiting. You may also have pain and tenderness where you get the injection.

After you're treated for syphilis, you can have a reaction called a Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction.

Symptoms may include:

- chills and/or fever (temperature over 38.5 °C)
- sweating
- headache
- a faster heart rate than normal
- muscle and joint pain
- feeling tired
- a rash

This reaction can happen 4 to 6 hours after the injection. It usually goes away in 24 hours. You can take pain medicine like ibuprofen (e.g., Motrin[®], Advil[®]) or acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol[®]). Follow the directions on the package or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Go to an emergency department or call 9-1-1 if you have:

- trouble breathing or swallowing
- swelling or tingling in the mouth or on the face
- hives
- wheezing

What follow-up do I need?

You will need blood tests on:

Month 1	Date:
Month 3	Date:
Month 6	Date:
Year 1	Date:
Year 2	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> No follow-up is needed	

You may need blood tests more often or you may not need all of the tests. Your nurse or doctor will tell you what you need.

Your blood test will likely stay positive for life, even if you've been treated. You can be **re-infected** with syphilis if you're exposed again.

Things to Think About

The birth control pill, patch, and ring might not work as well when you take penicillin. Keep using your regular method of birth control and use condoms for **7 days** after you get the injection to help prevent pregnancy.

Safer Sex

It's important not to have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) until you and your partner(s) are tested and for 7 days after you and your partner(s) are treated.

The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for 7 days after you and your partner(s) are treated. You can get re-infected if your sexual partner(s) hasn't been treated.

For More Information

- STI/HIV Information Line: 1-800-772-2437
- www.myhealth.alberta.ca
- www.sexgerms.com



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