

May 2, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

Re: National shortage of Benzathine Penicillin G (Bicillin L-A)

This letter is to advise you that there is a national shortage of Benzathine Penicillin G – Long Acting (Bicillin L-A). Pfizer is the only Canadian supplier of Bicillin L-A at present and the shortage is due to a manufacturing issue.

The shortage is expected to be short-term and Pfizer has indicated that a new supply will be available in July 2016. Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health are working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Health Canada regulators to mitigate the shortage. PHAC has recently published Interim Syphilis Treatment Guidelines during the Bicillin L-A Shortage 2016 <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/sti-its/cgsti-ldcits/assets/pdf/syphilis-eng.pdf>

Bicillin L-A is used as the preferred treatment for primary, secondary, early and late latent syphilis. AHS STI Centralized Services has a small supply of Bicillin L-A remaining and while supplies last, will continue to treat cases of infectious syphilis with Bicillin L-A. **Treatment and follow-up testing of all suspected or confirmed cases of syphilis should be done in consultation with STI Services.** Bicillin L-A is only available through AHS Centralized Services.

Serological follow-up with serial EIA and RPR is recommended at 1, 3, 6, 12 months after completion of treatment in infectious cases. For late latent syphilis, serology should be repeated at 12 and 24 months. HIV testing should be done at baseline and at 1 and 3 months after diagnosis with infectious syphilis.

Should you have any questions, please call AHS Centralized STI Services: 780-735-1466 or, toll free, 1-888-535-1466 and we will help to ensure that your patients receive appropriate treatment. Alternatively, you can refer your patients to one of the Alberta STI clinics [Calgary 403-955-6700; Edmonton: 780-342-2300; Ft. McMurray: 780-791-6182].

Sincerely,

Petra Smyczek MD, FRCPC
Provincial Medical Director, STI, Alberta Health Services