



**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**



This is an official **DPH Health Advisory**

On July 1, 2024, the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) became two separate agencies: S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) and S.C. Department of Public Health (DPH).

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Penicillin G Benzathine (Bicillin® L-A) Shortage Update

Summary

In an update on June 10, Pfizer reported it currently has available supply of its 2.4 million Units/4 milliliter Bicillin L-A product.¹ The South Carolina Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends using Bicillin L-A for all indicated patients, per [CDC's standard guidance](#).

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

Bicillin L-A supply is improving, but it will not be fully available until later this year, per [Pfizer's Availability Report](#).

At this time, providers should do the following:

- **Return to the standard use of Bicillin-L-A for all indicated patients**, per [CDC's standard guidance](#). Discontinue the use of doxycycline as a first line treatment for syphilis in most non-pregnant adults.
- As the Bicillin L-A supply returns to normal, please consider continuing alternative treatments for conditions other than syphilis, such as streptococcal pharyngitis/tonsillitis, unless there are absolute contraindications to all other appropriate medications. Other drugs such as penicillin V, amoxicillin, or azithromycin should be used.
- For congenital, ocular, and neurosyphilis – treat with intravenous aqueous penicillin G according to the 2021 CDC STI Treatment Guidelines.²
- Review patients' syphilis testing and treatment history to confirm that patients with reactive syphilis serology have an **active** syphilis infection, especially patients with low nontreponemal titers.
- **Consider prescribing doxycycline as post-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPEP) to prevent syphilis infections among appropriate patients** living with HIV and patients who are currently taking HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (HIV PrEP). A single 200 mg dose of doxycycline taken within 72 hours of unprotected sexual activity demonstrates significant reductions in syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia infections. More information about DoxyPEP can be found here:

- [CDC Clinical Guidelines for DoxyPEP, June 2024](#)
- [DPH Guidance on DoxyPEP, April 2024](#)

Further Actions if Continued Experience of Bicillin L-A Shortage:

- Notify DPH at PARKSLN@DPH.SC.GOV and the CDC STD Division at stdshortages@cdc.gov of any shortage or low inventories (less than 30-day supply) of Bicillin L-A in your facility.
- Request Bicillin L-A allocation prioritization to the Pfizer Supply Continuity Team at (844) 646-4398 (select 1 and then select 3).
- If you have a high-priority patient for whom there is no appropriate alternative treatment and you do not have access to a dose of Bicillin L-A, you may consult a DPH physician at (803) 391-0266 for consultation regarding referring the patient to DPH.
 - Be prepared to securely email the patient's most recent office note and their lab results. If DPH determines there are no alternatives for the patient and the agency has sufficient supply of the drug, they will accept the patient referral. All other medical care for the patient will remain the responsibility of the referring provider.

DPH Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements:

Reporting of **syphilis and congenital syphilis** is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DPH 2024 List of Reportable Conditions available at: <https://scdph.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-005869.pdf>.

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

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References

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023 June 13). *Availability of STI Testing and Treatment Products*. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/drug-notice.htm>.
2. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023 June 13). *2021 STI Treatment Guidelines: Syphilis*. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/syphilis.htm>.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert:	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory:	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.