

**NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ALERT
DRUG SHORTAGE OF BICILLIN L-A® FOR THE TREATMENT OF SYPHILIS**

January 16, 2026

Background

Benzathine penicillin G (Bicillin L-A®) continues to be on nationwide shortage. This drug shortage is of public health importance because penicillin G benzathine products are the only recommended treatment for pregnant people infected with or exposed to syphilis. Nationwide, congenital syphilis rates have increased 203 % in the past five years. According to 2023 CDC disease surveillance data, New Mexico is second in the country for rates of congenital syphilis.

The updated recovery date for Bicillin L-A® is [quarter 3 of 2026](#). Extencilline and Lentocilin® are imported products that have been temporarily approved by the FDA for importation to address the shortages of Bicillin L-A®. These products had been determined by the FDA to be the equivalent to Bicillin L-A®. As of December 15th, both imported products are unavailable to order due to wholesaler outages with no anticipated plans for resupply.

Due to the shortage of all three available penicillin G benzathine products, healthcare providers may consider the use of alternative treatment of syphilis with doxycycline for non-pregnant individuals. While penicillin G benzathine products remain the treatment of choice for all patients with syphilis, the CDC has recommended that healthcare providers prioritize the use of penicillin G benzathine products to treat pregnant people and babies with congenital syphilis.

For indications outside of syphilis, healthcare providers should not use penicillin G benzathine. Alternative treatments should be selected. For example, alternative treatments should be utilized for strep throat.

Recommendations

Healthcare providers should closely monitor their inventory of penicillin G benzathine products. Providers should use their clinical judgement to further prioritize the use of penicillin G benzathine products. If warranted due to the drug shortage, healthcare providers may consider use of alternate treatment with doxycycline. Penicillin G benzathine products remain the treatment of choice for all patients with syphilis and should be used when supply allows.

New Mexico Department of Health has provided an example of a prioritization strategy below that healthcare providers may consider utilizing in their efforts to ensure CDC priority populations have access to treatment for the duration of the drug shortage.

Penicillin G Benzathine Prioritization

Healthcare providers may consider prioritization of the following individuals diagnosed with syphilis for treatment with Bicillin L-A®, Extencilline or Lentocilin®:

- Pregnant individuals
 - Treatment with a penicillin G benzathine product is the only acceptable treatment for this group.
 - [The Society for Maternal and Fetal Medicine \(SMFM\) supports the use of Extencilline and Lentocilin® for treatment of patients with syphilis in pregnancy when Bicillin® L-A is unavailable.](#)
- Babies with congenital syphilis
- Sexual partners of pregnant individuals
- Individuals with an allergy to doxycycline
- Individuals who have already initiated treatment with a 3-week course of a penicillin G benzathine product

Note: Extencilline and Lentocilin® contain soy phospholipids and may cause hypersensitivity reactions (urticaria, anaphylactic shock) in patients with a history of allergy to soybeans.

Syphilis Alternate Treatment

If warranted due to the drug shortage, healthcare providers may consider treatment with doxycycline for non-pregnant individuals. Treat with doxycycline as follows:

- Early syphilis (primary, secondary, or early latent): Doxycycline 100mg by mouth twice daily for 14 days.
- Late syphilis (late latent or unknown duration): Doxycycline 100mg by mouth twice daily for 28 days.

Doxycycline is an FDA Pregnancy Category D medication. It is not an alternative treatment for pregnant individuals. Penicillin G Benzathine products (Bicillin L-A®, Extencilline, and Lentocillin®) are the only recommended treatment for pregnant people infected with or exposed to syphilis.

Bicillin L-A® Medical Request

Bicillin L-A® continues to be available directly through Pfizer's Medical request process. The [medical request form](#) must be completed by the treating Health Care Provider or Director of Pharmacy on a **per patient basis**. Pfizer will only fulfill product for patients with confirmed congenital syphilis or risk of congenital syphilis. The completed [medical request form](#) should be emailed to PISupplyContinuity@pfizer.com.

For more information regarding the medical request process, please review the Pfizer Availability Update for Bicillin LA Letter:

https://www.pfizerhospitalus.com/sites/default/files/news_announcements/Bicillin%20Supply%20Update%20July%202025_0.pdf

Extencilline Availability Update

The manufacturer is in the process of discontinuing the product. Existing inventory available through authorized distributors is being allocated. Many distributors are already out of stock.

Lentocillin® Availability Update

Imported Lentocillin is not available to order as of 12/17/2025. According to TopRx, the distributor of Lentocillin, they will not continue to distribute the product.

Further Considerations

- Follow RPR titers to ensure a 4-fold decrease is achieved in 6 to 12 months.
- Patients receiving alternative treatment with doxycycline should receive education on the importance of adherence.
- Prioritization strategy will be periodically re-assessed to match available supply.

Resources

Healthcare providers should not hesitate to call the New Mexico Department of Health Helpline at 1-833-796-8773 with questions regarding syphilis staging, treatment and prioritization efforts. Syphilis is a reportable condition in New Mexico. The sexually transmitted disease program can also assist in obtaining historical RPR titers for evaluating response to treatment or re-infection.

[FDA Drug Shortages](#)

[CDC - STD Treatment - Drug notices.](#)

[CDC STI Treatment Guidelines](#)

[Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2021 \(cdc.gov\)](#)

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the New Mexico Health Alert Network, click the following link to go directly to the HAN registration page <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please provide all information requested to begin receiving important health alerts and advisories.