

**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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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<sup>®</sup>, Extencilline, and Lentocilin<sup>®</sup>) are the only recommended treatment for pregnant people infected with or exposed to syphilis.**

## Bicillin L-A<sup>®</sup> Medical Request

Bicillin L-A<sup>®</sup> 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](mailto: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](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.

## Lentocilin<sup>®</sup> Availability Update

Imported Lentocilin is not available to order as of 12/17/2025. According to TopRx, the distributor of Lentocilin, 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.***