



## Health, Healthy Living and Seniors

Public Health and Primary Health Care Division  
Communicable Disease Control  
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April 14, 2016

Dear Health Care Provider:

### **Re: National Shortage of Benzathine Penicillin (Bicillin)**

Manitoba Health Healthy Living and Seniors (MHLS) has been notified of a national shortage of benzathine penicillin (Bicillin), expected to last until at least July 2016. Provincial stock of Bicillin is at risk of being rapidly depleted, as Manitoba is currently experiencing an outbreak of syphilis in several RHAs.

MHLS is consulting with Health Canada to determine what supply is in the system and if there is an alternate access to supply.

In the meantime, based on consultation between Medical Officers of Health and Infectious Disease specialists, MHLS is recommending the following strict eligibility criteria for Bicillin treatment.

- Pregnant individuals diagnosed with primary, secondary, early latent or late latent syphilis
- Other individuals with infectious syphilis (primary, secondary or early latent) where alternative regimens are not possible due to allergy or high likelihood of poor adherence to treatment.

All other cases of infectious syphilis (primary, secondary or early latent) should be treated with one of the following alternative regimens until after the Bicillin supply chain is restored.

- Doxycycline 100 mg BID X14 days (first choice), or
- Ceftriaxone 1-2 g IM daily for 10-14 days for primary or secondary syphilis
- Treatment with Azithromycin is **not** recommended

Bicillin should not be used to treat late latent syphilis nor contacts to syphilis until further notice. Instead, late latent syphilis should be treated with either an alternative regimen (see the provincial syphilis protocol) or should be deferred until after the Bicillin supply chain is restored. Contacts to syphilis may be presumptively treated with Doxycycline as an alternative drug until their serologic results are available.

There is no change to recommended management for tertiary, congenital and neurosyphilis (see provincial syphilis protocol).

MHLS will keep you updated as new information is made available.

If you have any questions, please contact MHLS at 204-788-6737

Sincerely,

Thank you.

*“Original signed by”*

Richard Baydack, PhD  
Director  
Communicable Disease Control

*“Original signed by”*

Joss Reimer, MD  
Medical Officer of Health  
Communicable Disease Control