

Ministry of Health
Office of Chief Medical
Officer of Health, Public
Health
Box 12
Toronto ON M7A 1N3

Ministère de la Santé
Bureau du médecin
hygiéniste en chef,
santé publique
Boîte à lettres 12
Toronto ON M7A 1N3

January 23, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: **Medical Officers of Health / Associate Medical Officers of Health**

FROM: **Dr. Kate Bingham**
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

RE: **Update – Shortage of Benzathine Penicillin G (Bicillin® L-A)**

Dear colleagues,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding the ongoing national shortage of Benzathine Penicillin G (Bicillin® L-A) 1,200,000 IU/2mL, indicated as the preferred treatment for syphilis, and supplied to Ontario by Pfizer, the only Canadian vendor. This Tier 3 shortage began on December 2, 2025, and is expected to last until at least January 30, 2026. More information can be found [here](#).

During the shortage, the Ministry recommends public health units (PHUs) and health care providers (HCPs) restrict use of Bicillin® L-A and use alternative treatments for syphilis as per the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) [Interim Syphilis Treatment Guidelines in the Event of a Benzathine Penicillin G \(Bicillin® L-A\) Shortage](#).

The use of Bicillin® L-A should be restricted to:

- Pregnant individuals (all stages) and their ongoing sexual contact(s). Note that infectious syphilis (primary, secondary, and early latent) only requires one dose of 2.4 million units of Bicillin® L-A, including during pregnancy.
- Infectious cases (primary, secondary and early latent syphilis), regardless of HIV status, if adherence to alternative treatment and follow-up is uncertain.

During the shortage, oral doxycycline is the preferred treatment for initiating therapy in non-pregnant adult patients with late latent, latent of unknown duration, or tertiary syphilis that does not involve the central nervous system. If there is no uncertainty

regarding staging of late latent syphilis, clinicians may opt to defer initiation of treatment until the supply of Bicillin® L-A is restored. Non-pregnant adults who have already initiated their treatment course with Bicillin® L-A should complete their therapy with Bicillin® L-A according to standard guidelines.

During the shortage, the Ministry is requesting the following of PHUs:

- Communicate this recommendation to relevant local HCPs.
- Confirm the existing inventory of Bicillin® L-A in their catchment area, including product already distributed to HCPs/clinics, and to send the confirmed amount to idpp@ontario.ca. This will provide the Ministry with further information on inventory to supplement Panorama reports.
- Ensure Bicillin® L-A that is closest to expiry is used first and that [cold chain storage and handling requirements](#) are being met.
- Continue to send the pre-approval form to idpp@ontario.ca for the Ministry's review and approval prior to requesting Bicillin® L-A in Panorama, as per the usual process.

The Ministry continues to monitor the Bicillin® L-A shortage situation and will communicate updates or changes in guidance to PHUs as needed.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact idpp@ontario.ca.



Dr. Kate Bingham, MD, MSc, CCFP-EM, FRCPC
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario

cc. Dr. Kieran Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC FCAHS