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HEALTH ADVISORY: BENZATHINE PENICILLIN G SHORTAGE

JUNE 8TH, 2016

The San Francisco Dept. of Public Health (SFDPH) provides this guidance based on current information. Recommendations may change, and SF recommendations may differ from those issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

The manufacturer has announced a temporary shortage of Bicillin® L-A (penicillin G benzathine suspension) affecting three formulations: Bicillin L-A 600,000U Pediatric Injection, Bicillin L-A 1,200,000U/2mL, and Bicillin L-A 2,400,000U/4mL. The shortage is expected to resolve by July 2016.

Bicillin L-A is the only acceptable treatment for pregnant women infected with or exposed to syphilis.

Among non-pregnant adults, doxycycline 100 mg PO BID x 14 days is an acceptable alternative for those with primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis, and for those who have been exposed to a patient with infectious syphilis. Doxycycline 100 mg PO BID x 28 days is an acceptable alternative for those with late latent syphilis.

Other formulations of penicillin (e.g. Bicillin® C-R) are *not* acceptable alternatives for the treatment of syphilis.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF ALL CLINICIANS

1. **Prioritize benzathine penicillin G (Bicillin L-A) for pregnant women with syphilis infection or exposure,** as well as for non-pregnant syphilis patients with primary, secondary, or early latent syphilis who are unlikely to adhere to a multi-day doxycycline regimen or who have a contraindication to doxycycline.
2. **Contact STD Control** at 415-487-5503 if you are having trouble obtaining Bicillin L-A.
3. **If your stocks of Bicillin L-A are low, consider doxycycline for non-pregnant adults** who are likely to adhere to a multi-day regimen.
4. **Conserve Bicillin-LA by using alternative drugs** to treat group A strep pharyngitis and for primary rheumatic fever prophylaxis, e.g. penicillin V, amoxicillin, and azithromycin.
5. **Check for updates** about the shortage on the SF City Clinic website: www.sfcityclinic.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

CDC announcements about the Bicillin L-A shortage: http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/drugnotices/bicillinshortage.htm

FDA on Bicillin L-A shortage:
http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/drugshortages/dsp_ActiveIngredientDetails.cfm?AI=Penicillin%20G%20Benzathine%20(Bicillin%20L-A)%20Injection&st=c&tab=tabs-

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention STD Treatment Guidelines: http://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/default.htm

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Categories of urgency levels
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