

July 26, 2016

Re: Update on Benzathine Penicillin G (Bicillin L-A) shortage and STI outbreak in Alberta

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to inform you that the national shortage of Benzathine Penicillin G (Bicillin L-A) has been resolved. Health Canada has confirmed with Pfizer that their production has returned to a normal replenishment schedule and that they should be able to provide a regular supply of Bicillin L-A for the foreseeable future.

For guidance on treatment of syphilis, please consult the Alberta Treatment Guidelines for Sexually Transmitted Infections (2012) <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/STI-Treatment-Guidelines-2012.pdf>, or AHS STI Centralized Services, or refer your patient to one of the Alberta STI clinics in Calgary, Edmonton and Ft. McMurray (see contact information below). Treatment and follow-up of all suspected or confirmed cases of syphilis should be done in consultation with STI Centralized Services.

In April 2016, an STI outbreak was declared in Alberta based on an increase in reported cases in 2015. STI rates remain high in 2016, and gonorrhea and infectious syphilis rates are double what they were before the outbreak (gonorrhea rate in 2014: 45/100.000, in 2015: 80/100.000; infectious syphilis rate in 2014: 4/100.000, in 2015: 8/100.000).

Screening for sexually transmitted infections should be offered to all sexually active persons. All persons reporting sex with new, anonymous or multiple partners should be re-screened every 3-6 months. For **asymptomatic** individuals the following screening tests are recommended:

- **Urine (males and females):** Genprobe Aptima Combo-2 test, a nucleic acid amplification test (**NAAT**) for **Gonorrhea and Chlamydia**.
- **Serology: Syphilis enzyme immuno-assay (EIA), anti-HIV antibody and Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)** if there is no history of hepatitis B immunization or immunization status is unknown. Anti-HBsAg levels should be checked in individuals at high risk for hepatitis B infection unless there is previous documentation of immunity.
- **For Men reporting same sex partners:** routine screening of **extragenital sites (rectum/pharynx) for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia with NAAT** is recommended at least every 6-12 months.

If you have any questions about STI testing in **symptomatic** individuals, please consult with an STI expert or clinic (see contact numbers below).

For consultation please call:

AHS Centralized STI Services: 780-735-1466 or, toll free, 1-888-535-1466

STI Clinics: Calgary 403-955-6700; Edmonton: 780-342-2300; Ft. McMurray: 780-791-6182

Sincerely,

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