



ALERT FOR CLINICIANS

Shortage and prioritisation of Bicillin L-A

KEY POINTS

- There is a national shortage of benzathine benzylpenicillin tetrahydrate (Bicillin L-A; Pfizer brand) prefilled syringes for injection (both 600,000 units and 1.2 million units per syringe).
- The shortage will continue into 2024.
- Prioritise use of Bicillin L-A prefilled syringes for neonatal and paediatric patients and select healthcare settings where the use of alternative products is not appropriate.
- The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have approved an alternative product, benzathine benzylpenicillin 1.2 million unit vial (Brancaster Pharma, UK). The product requires reconstitution prior to administration and has different [administration instructions](#) to the Bicillin L-A prefilled syringe.
- Prioritise the alternative benzathine benzylpenicillin for certain conditions; refer to [TGA national advice](#) regarding prioritisation and use of Bicillin L-A and the alternative product.

Clinical considerations for prioritisation

- Where indicated, Bicillin L-A prefilled syringes should be prioritised for use only in:
 1. Neonatal and paediatric patients.
 2. Health care settings where the use of the Brancaster Pharma, UK product is not appropriate, including rural and remote settings and some Aboriginal Medical Services or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.
- Products containing benzathine benzylpenicillin should be prioritised for use in the following conditions:
 1. Treatment of definite, probable and possible acute rheumatic fever.
 2. Secondary prophylaxis of acute rheumatic fever and/or rheumatic heart disease.
 3. Treatment of syphilis in those with proven or suspected infection, and their recent sexual contacts.
 4. Patients who require treatment for group-A streptococcal infection of the respiratory tract and skin who are at high risk of acute rheumatic fever, rheumatic heart disease or acute post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis, where oral therapy is not acceptable or the likelihood of non-adherence is high.
- Where patients fall outside the above priority conditions and settings, prescribers should refer to the [Australian Therapeutic Guidelines](#), local guidelines and/or infectious disease experts for advice on alternative antibiotic agents.
- For further information see the [Safety considerations during Bicillin L-A supply disruption](#) fact sheet and [administration instructions](#) for the Brancaster Pharma, UK product.

Shortage updates

- It is recommended that orders for the Brancaster Pharma, UK product be placed as soon as possible to prevent a gap in supply. The approval holder, ORSPEC Pharma Pty Ltd, can be contacted on +61 2 4339 4239 or customerservice@orspecpharma.com for ordering and supply.
- Contact the [WA Rheumatic Heart Disease program](#) or your [local public health unit](#) (for syphilis) if you are having difficulty sourcing benzathine benzylpenicillin to treat patients.
- The shortage of the Bicillin L-A 1.2 million units product is expected to resolve by 29 February 2024 but dates may change.
- Check the [medicine shortage reports database](#) for further updates on shortage dates and management actions that have been implemented.

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