

Penicillin G Benzathine (Bicillin[®] L-A) For Treatment of Syphilis

Long-acting penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin[®] L-A) is the preferred antibiotic treatment for syphilis. Each dose requires two intramuscular injections, one injection into each hip (preferred site) or buttock muscle at the same visit.

One dose of Bicillin[®] L-A 2.4 million units is usually adequate to treat infectious syphilis. However, if the infection has been present for more than one year, or for an unknown length of time, then three doses of Bicillin[®] L-A 2.4 million units are needed; these injections are given once a week over three weeks.

Allergies

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies to penicillins or cephalosporins:
 - e.g. penicillin V-K and amoxicillin (Amoxil[®])
 - e.g. cefixime (Suprax[®]), cephalexin (Keflex[®]), cefaclor (Ceclor[®])

Pregnancy and Chest/Breastfeeding

- Please consult your healthcare provider if you are chest/breastfeeding.
- If you are diagnosed with syphilis while you are pregnant or chest/breastfeeding, it is very important that you receive treatment.
- If you are being treated for syphilis during pregnancy, please discuss any special recommendations or considerations with your healthcare provider.

Caution

- **Drug Interactions:** Please note that individual drug interactions are no longer listed in this document. If you are taking any prescription, non-prescription, herbal, or recreational products, please discuss with your healthcare provider.

Care of Yourself After Treatment

- You will be asked to wait in the clinic for 15 minutes after your Bicillin[®] L-A injections.
- If you have any reactions after treatment (e.g. rash, itchiness, or breathing difficulties), please inform a staff member immediately.

- If these symptoms occur after leaving the clinic, please seek emergency care immediately (call 9-1-1 or go to a hospital or urgent care centre).

Side Effects

- You may get mild, temporary pain at the injection site.
- You may have diarrhea after treatment.
- Some may get a **Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction**: fever, chills, muscle aches, headache, or fatigue.
 - A Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction is a set of temporary side effects that may occur a few hours after treatment of syphilis. Not everyone will have this reaction.
 - Do not be alarmed, this is **not an allergic response** and usually ends in 24 hours.
 - Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®), if needed to help relieve symptoms.
- If these effects don't go away or get worse, please contact your healthcare provider.

Stages of Syphilis

- Treatment and follow-up recommendations are based on how long the syphilis infection has been present in your body. Your healthcare provider will inform you of what stage of syphilis you have, and what treatment is required. You may also receive a call from a nurse on behalf of Public Health to discuss partner follow-up and recommendations for follow-up testing.

If you have any questions or need more information, please visit www.smartsexresource.com or contact your healthcare provider.

SmartSex Resource: Syphilis



BCCDC Health Info: Syphilis

