

## Clinical Care Alert: Benzathine Benzylpenicillin (Bicillin LA®) Shortage

If local antimicrobial stewardship, microbiology or infectious diseases services are available then please consult for health service specific clinical advice.

**Shortage:** The current shortage is due to manufacturing issues affecting both 600,000units/prefilled syringe and 1.2million units/prefilled syringe strengths. Central Pharmacy has limited stock of both strengths of Bicillin – LA prefilled syringes and will be rationing stock. An S19A product may be available via Central Pharmacy. This factsheet is intended for use during the shortage period only. If adequate supply of benzathine benzylpenicillin is available, please return to using it in line with relevant local and national guidelines.

### Clinical Practice Points

#### 1. Is there a **NEED** for antibiotic therapy?

Review clinical, laboratory and imaging data:

- Is the diagnosis established, or is this prophylactic / pre-emptive therapy?
- Can other investigations assist?

#### 2. Consider **ALTERNATIVE AGENTS** to benzathine benzylpenicillin

- Contact your local Infectious Diseases team / antimicrobial stewardship service if available, **OR** QLD Statewide Antimicrobial Stewardship Hotline – 1300 QLD ABX (1300 753 229)  
Refer to the table over the page for alternative regimens to benzathine benzylpenicillin

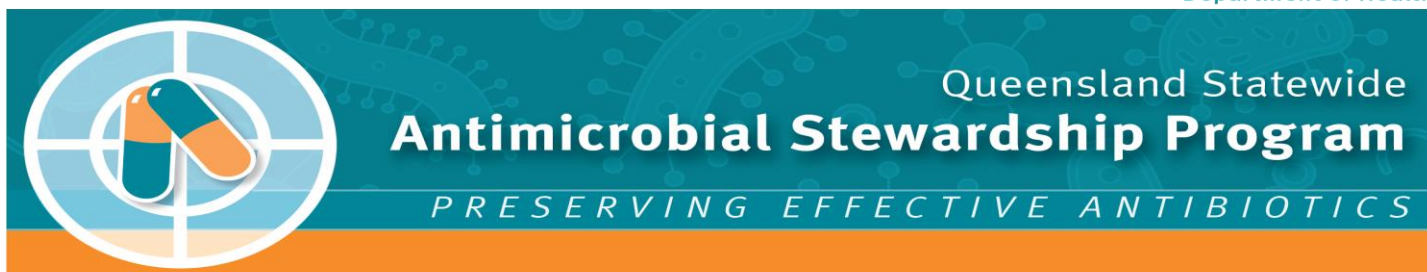
#### 3. **CONSERVE** benzathine benzylpenicillin for the following indications:

- Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and secondary prophylaxis
- Syphilis
- Acute post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis (APSGN)

### Guidelines for alternate regimens while conserving benzathine benzylpenicillin

Syndrome or diagnosis	Treatment	Comment
Treatment of streptococcal tonsillitis or pharyngitis in high-risk settings	Paediatrics – refer to <a href="#">RHD Australia guidelines</a> and the <a href="#">CHQ Antibiocard</a>	
	<b>Adults:</b> phenoxymethylpenicillin 500 mg orally, 12-hourly for 10 days.	
Treatment of impetigo (skin sores) in endemic areas.	Paediatrics – refer to <a href="#">RHD Australia guidelines</a> and the <a href="#">CHQ Antibiocard</a>	
	<b>Adults:</b> Trimethoprim + sulfamethoxazole: 160mg+800 mg orally, 12-hourly for 3 days OR Trimethoprim + sulfamethoxazole: 320mg+1600 mg orally, daily for 5 days.	Avoid trimethoprim + sulfamethoxazole in pregnancy and near term. (Pregnancy Category B3)
Prophylaxis of invasive group A streptococcal infections (iGAS)	Paediatrics – refer to <a href="#">RHD Australia guidelines</a> and the <a href="#">Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic</a>	
	<b>Adults:</b> cefalexin 1g orally, 12-hourly for 10 days.	Always seek expert advice. Infection prevention for close contacts of an invasive group A streptococcal infection case





## Guidelines for alternate regimens if benzathine benzylpenicillin is no longer available

Syndrome or diagnosis	Treatment	Comment
Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF)	Paediatrics – refer to <a href="#">RHD Australia guidelines</a> and the <a href="#">Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic</a>	
	<b>Adults:</b> phenoxymethylpenicillin 500 mg orally, 12-hourly for 10 days	Review need for ongoing prophylaxis.
Secondary prevention of ARF	Paediatrics – refer to <a href="#">RHD Australia guidelines</a> and the <a href="#">Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic</a>	
	<b>Adults:</b> phenoxymethylpenicillin 250 mg orally, 12-hourly	Duration depends on clinical scenario. Switch to oral penicillin may be suitable; seek expert advice.
Acute post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis (APSGN)	Paediatrics – refer to <a href="#">RHD Australia guidelines</a> and seek Paediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist advice.	
	<b>Adults:</b> trimethoprim + sulfamethoxazole 160+800 mg orally, 12-hourly for 3 days	Always seek expert advice for use in pregnancy and breastfeeding.
Syphilis  - Congenital syphilis - Early syphilis - Late latent syphilis - Maternal syphilis	Paediatrics: refer to <a href="#">ASID Management of Perinatal infections(3rd edition) guidelines</a> , and, <a href="#">QLD clinical guidelines: syphilis &amp; pregnancy</a> . Contact Paediatric Infectious Diseases specialist for advice.	
	<b>Adults:</b> procaine benzylpenicillin 1.5g intramuscularly, daily OR doxycycline 100 mg orally, 12-hourly (duration depends on the type of syphilis – seek expert advice)	Procaine benzylpenicillin is an SAS product which can be sourced from Central Pharmacy.  For maternal & congenital syphilis see the ASID perinatal infection & Qld Clinical guidelines: syphilis & pregnancy.

### References

- 1) Therapeutic Guidelines, Melbourne: Therapeutic Guidelines limited; last updated 2025; Accessed January 2026; Available: <http://tg.org.au>
- 2) Australian Medicines Handbook Pty Ltd, Adelaide, Australia. Available: [Australian Medicines Handbook \(amh.net.au\)](http://amh.net.au). Last updated 2026.
- 3) Menzies School of Health Research (ARF/RHD writing group). Australian guideline for the prevention, diagnosis and management of acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease (Edition 3.3) 2025. Available:
- 4) Australasian Society of Infectious Diseases (ASID) (2023) Management of perinatal infection guidelines. Available: [https://rhdaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Australian-ARF-RHD-Guideline-2025\\_August\\_1.pdf](https://rhdaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Australian-ARF-RHD-Guideline-2025_August_1.pdf) Available: [Publications – ASID | Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases](#)
- 5) The Royal Women's Hospital, Victoria, Australia. (2023) *Pregnancy and breastfeeding medicines guide; Trimethoprim with sulfamethoxazole monograph*. Available: <https://thewomenspbmg.org.au/medicines/trimethoprim-with-sulfamethoxazole>
- 6) Queensland Clinical Guidelines; maternity and neonatal clinical guidelines; syphilis and pregnancy (2024). Available: [Maternity and Neonatal Clinical Guidelines | Queensland Clinical Guidelines | Queensland Health | Queensland Health](#)
- 7) Melbourne sexual health centre, Syphilis treatment guidelines (Last updated 2021), Available: [Syphilis treatment guidelines - Melbourne Sexual Health Centre \(MSHC\)](#)
- 8) World Health Organisation; Guidelines for the treatment of Treponema pallidum (syphilis) (2016); Available: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/249572/9789241549806-eng.pdf?sequence=1>.

