



March 27, 2019

TO: Oregon Health Officers & STD Program
Managers and Administrators

FROM: Tim Menza, HIV/STD/TB Program Medical Director

RE: STD Drug Availability Update

As you may be aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced shortages of several medications relevant to STD treatment.

1. Diluents for ceftriaxone are in limited supply (1% lidocaine without epinephrine, sterile water, and 0.9% sodium chloride)

Ceftriaxone is the last remaining known effective antimicrobial for treatment of uncomplicated gonorrhea, and dual therapy with azithromycin is recommended to prevent the development of ceftriaxone resistance in the U.S. The usual preparation for ceftriaxone is a powder form reconstituted with diluent. The diluent preferred by most STD clinical experts to minimize significant patient discomfort from the injection is 1% lidocaine without epinephrine. The [full product insert](#) for ceftriaxone lists other diluents for reconstitution.

The STD Program will continue to provide updates and communicate with our partners when diluents in limited supply return to normal supply levels. Current status of drug shortages can be found at: <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/drugshortages/>.

2. Erythromycin (0.5%) ophthalmic ointment shortage

Erythromycin (0.5%) ophthalmic ointment is the only antibiotic ointment currently recommended and the only drug cleared by the FDA for prophylaxis of gonococcal ophthalmia neonatorum. Gonorrhea ocular prophylaxis of newborns is mandated by law in most states and is considered standard neonatal care.

If erythromycin ointment is not available, the CDC recommends that neonates at risk for exposure to *N. gonorrhoeae* during delivery (especially those born to a mother at risk for gonococcal infection or with no prenatal care) be administered ceftriaxone 25–50 mg/kg IV or IM, not to exceed 125 mg in a single dose. For more information about gonorrhea ocular prophylaxis, see the [2015 STD Treatment Guidelines](#).

3. Penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A®) and Penicillin G procaine update

Good news! Both penicillin G benzathine (Bicillin L-A) and penicillin G procaine are available at normal supply levels. The shortage of penicillin G procaine, an alternative regimen for outpatient treatment of neurosyphilis and congenital syphilis, was especially lengthy. Please notify providers and pharmacists of the availability of penicillin G procaine so they are aware this product is again available.

Contact us! If you have any questions about this update, please contact Jillian Garai (jillian.d.garai@state.or.us, 971-673-1071), Josh Ferrer (joshua.s.ferrer@state.or.us, 971-673-0149), or Tim Menza (timothy.w.menza@state.or.us, 971-673-0150). Thank you for your continued commitment to STD prevention in Oregon.