

Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) basics

Treats bacterial infections. Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) is the first-choice treatment for syphilis. It is not as effective for treatment of other types of bacterial infections.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.

	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Long term
Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) Drug effectiveness					
Possible side effects†					
Inflammatory response syndrome (Herx reaction)					
Allergic reaction					
Diarrhea					
Pain and redness at site of injection					
Rash					

† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Given as a deep injection into the muscle in the buttock or thigh.
- Can cause an allergic reaction, especially if you have a history of allergy to penicillins.
- Can cause diarrhea.
- Take with Tylenol or Motrin if you experience any muscle pain, fever, or headache while taking Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine).

Risks and warnings

The FDA has identified these as possible serious or life-threatening risks with this medication. Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Deep muscle injection

Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) should be an injection into the muscle. Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) is NOT injected into the vein or nerve. Injection into the vein can result in serious injury and possibly death; while injection into the nerve can cause nerve damage. Your doctor or nurse will make sure this is performed correctly.

Severe allergic reaction

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to penicillin or other antibiotics. Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) can cause a severe allergic reaction including face swelling and trouble breathing. Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) is usually given in a doctor's office, so if you do have a severe reaction you will get emergency medical treatment right away.

Short-term immune reaction

If you are taking Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) for syphilis treatment, you might get a short-term immune reaction called Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction, which can include fever, headache, or muscle pain within 1 day of starting this medicine. If this happens, tell your doctor as they might have you take acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help with these symptoms.