



**Health, Seniors and Active Living**  
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**Santé, Aînés et Vie active**  
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July 15, 2019

Dear Health Care Provider:

**RE: Clarification of the treatment of primary, secondary or early latent syphilis in pregnancy**

You received correspondence on June 3, 2019 that “persons who are **allergic to penicillin** should be treated with IM or IV ceftriaxone 1g daily X10 days; if ceftriaxone cannot be administered, a penicillin desensitization protocol may be used”.

It is important to note that there is no satisfactory alternative to benzathine penicillin for the treatment of syphilis in pregnancy.

Please note that **pregnant persons who are allergic to penicillin** should be treated with a **penicillin desensitization protocol**. Data are insufficient to recommend the use of ceftriaxone for treatment of syphilis in pregnant persons.

Persons who self-report a penicillin allergy who only have features of a non-allergic reaction (such as isolated nausea, diarrhea, or vaginal candidiasis) can safely receive penicillin. Those who reacted to an aminopenicillin (amoxicillin/ampicillin) but who have tolerated a subsequent course of penicillin have proven to be not allergic and will tolerate benzathine penicillin, but may have a selective allergy to the aminopenicillins. If the original reaction was to Penicillin G or V and they have tolerated a subsequent course of amoxicillin, they have proven to be not allergic to all penicillins. Receipt of subsequent courses of penicillin must be confirmed on DPIN and with the individual. All other scenarios warrant consultation with an Allergist.

For an **urgent referral** for clarification of allergy status and administration of a penicillin desensitization protocol to pregnant persons, please **call 204-787-2071** to speak to on-call Allergy and Immunology **AND** to the on-call Obstetrician.

Any comments or questions regarding syphilis can be directed to Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living at [stbbi@gov.mb.ca](mailto:stbbi@gov.mb.ca).

For more clinical management information about syphilis go to [https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/syph\\_mgmt\\_tool.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/syph_mgmt_tool.pdf).

Sincerely,

*“Original Signed By”*

Brent Roussin, MD  
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer

*“Original Signed By”*

Richard Baydack, PhD  
Director