



July 31, 2015

TO: Oregon Medical Providers

FROM: Sean Schafer, MD MPH 
Medical Epidemiologist

RE: Drugs to Treat Gonorrhea & Syphilis

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to **remember to use drugs recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to treat gonorrhea and syphilis.** We've noticed that some recent patients received less effective drugs for gonorrhea or syphilis that are not currently among those recommended for these conditions by CDC.

Rates of both infections have risen substantially in Oregon during the past few years. Appropriate antibiotic treatment of sexually transmitted infections is critical to our statewide efforts to reduce their incidence and impact and to prevent emergence of resistant strains.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released their updated 2015 Sexually Transmitted Disease Treatment Guidelines¹. A free version of the guidelines is also available for smartphone and available from the Apple Store and other sources of smart phone applications. Current guidelines recommend the following regimens for gonorrhea and syphilis:

Gonorrhea

Uncomplicated infections of the pharynx, cervix, urethra, or rectum

Ceftriaxone 250 mg in a single intramuscular dose

PLUS

Azithromycin 1g orally in a single dose

Syphilis

Primary, secondary, and early latent (known to be <1 year)

Benzathine penicillin G 2.4 million units IM in a single dose²

Late latent (>1 year or of unknown duration) and late syphilis with clinical manifestations other than neurosyphilis

Benzathine penicillin G 7.2 million units total, administered as 3 doses of 2.4 million units IM each at 1-week intervals

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/>

² Please note that the standard packaging consists of syringes pre-filled with 1.2 million units of benzathine penicillin. Always read packaging instructions carefully, but if you have syringes pre-filled with 1.2 million units, a complete adult dose requires administration of 2 full pre-filled syringes, one in each gluteus (preferably) or quadriceps muscle.

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Neurosyphilis

Aqueous crystalline penicillin G 18-24 million units per day, administered as 3-4 million units IV every 4 hours or continuous infusion, for 10-14 days

Information on congenital and pediatric dosing as well as alternate regimens for patients with cephalosporin or penicillin allergies, or who may be pregnant can be found in the treatment guidelines available or in the Oregon Health Authority Investigative Guidelines available at: <http://bit.ly/OR-IG>.

You may also contact your local county health department or the Oregon STD Program at 971-673-0153 if you have questions or need assistance.

Thank you for your continued efforts to address the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in Oregon.