

Do you have a Penicillin Allergy?

If you were told you were allergic to penicillin, chances are you are not. Facts about penicillin allergy:

- 10% of the population report they have an allergy to penicillin. However, after careful evaluation, 90% of these individuals are found not to be allergic.
- In patients who are allergic to penicillin, 50% outgrow their allergy after 5 years and 80% outgrow after 10 years of avoidance.
- Family history of penicillin allergy does not increase your own personal risk of having an allergy.

Why should you get your allergy status checked?

Harms associated with using alternative antibiotics

- Increased risk of creating “superbugs”
- Exposing your baby to alternative antibiotics
- More side effects
- Increasing the risk of infection post delivery
- needing to use several antibiotics in combination to treat the same infection, more expensive.

Benefits of removing your allergy

Removing a penicillin allergy label ensures you have the best antibiotic options available for treatment of infections during pregnancy and beyond.

What is involved in testing?



Penicillin Skin Testing

Penicillin skin testing uses a small amount of penicillin and places it under the skin where allergy cells are located. This test has been available for many decades and has a very good safety record. Several studies have even demonstrated that performing

penicillin skin testing is safe even during pregnancy. It has a 99% accuracy at ruling out potentially life threatening (anaphylactic) penicillin allergies.

Oral Challenge Test

If your skin testing is negative, your physician will proceed to an oral challenge test. You will be given a single dose of a penicillin antibiotic. You will be monitored afterwards by either a nurse or physician. The majority of immediate reactions occur within 30 minutes of ingestion and tend to be mild. You will be monitored for at least 1 hour afterwards. The risk of a severe reaction is very low (1/200 000) with oral administration of antibiotics. Once you have “passed” your oral challenge, you will be deemed not allergic. Your risk of developing a subsequent allergy will be the same as anyone else.

Is it safe in Pregnancy?

Yes! Penicillin allergy testing has been shown to be safe in pregnancy for you and your baby



Oral Amoxicillin Challenge Test

Physician or Delegated Provider who ordered the test: _____

Oral Amoxicillin Test performed on (dd/mm/yy): _____

Results of the Oral Amoxicillin Test

Oral Amoxicillin test is **POSITIVE**

- You were given amoxicillin and had a reaction
- We will update your hospital medical record to show this.
- Your family doctor will be notified so that your medical record can be updated.
- Your PharmaNet will be updated so pharmacists know not to give you penicillin antibiotics in the future.
- We recommend that you get re-evaluated by an allergist in 5 years' time, as 50% of patients will lose their allergy to penicillin within this time.
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Oral Amoxicillin test is **NEGATIVE**

- You were given amoxicillin and did not react to it.
- You have the same low risk of a serious reaction to penicillin antibiotics as those who have never had a history of penicillin allergy.
- We will update your hospital medical record to show this.
- Your family doctor will be notified so that your medical record can be updated.
- Your PharmaNet will be updated so pharmacists know that you can receive penicillin antibiotics in the future.
- You should monitor for any rashes over the next several days. Should a rash occur, please contact our clinic and leave a message at **604-875- 3548**. Delayed rashes are often bothersome but do not increase your risk of life threatening (anaphylactic) allergic reactions.

Sincerely,

BCWH Allergy Challenge Team