

## 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