ANTIMICROBIAL – CEPHALOSPORIN USE IN PENICILLIN ALLERGIC PATIENTS

When considering use of a cephalosporin* in a patient with a history of possible allergic reaction to penicillin, the following approach to antibiotic selection is recommended.

1. Obtain history of allergic reaction to penicillin
   - YES
   - NO

2. Has subsequently received penicillin or cephalosporin since reaction without adverse effects?
   - YES
   - NO

3. GI Symptoms Only?
   - YES
   - NO

4. Dermatological Symptoms Only?
   - YES
   - NO

5. Cardiac or Respiratory Symptoms present
   - YES
   - NO

6. Last exposure occurred more than 10 years ago
   - YES
   - NO

Cephalosporin can be used with minimal risk of immediate reactions.

Onset of symptoms 2 or more days following penicillin administration?

Consider alternative antibiotic*

Cephalosporin should only be used following penicillin skin testing.

Physician must be present for first dose of cephalosporin.

*Meropenem is considered to have low risk of cross reactivity to penicillin or cephalosporins.

Adapted from: PHC Algorithm "Antimicrobial – cephalosporin use in penicillin allergic patients"