

## Do you have a Penicillin Allergy?

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



- 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

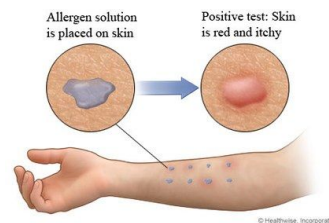
- Increased risk of creating “superbugs”
- Exposing yourself to second best or other antibiotics
- More side effects
- Increasing the chances of infection with other bacteria
- Needing to use several antibiotics in combination to treat the same infection, which is more expensive.

### Benefits of removing your allergy

Removing a penicillin allergy label makes sure that you have the best antibiotic options available for treatment of infections during this hospitalization 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 shown that performing penicillin skin testing is safe. It has a 99% accuracy at ruling out potentially life threatening (anaphylactic) penicillin allergies.

### Oral Challenge Test



If your physician decides that you have a low chance of having an allergy, you will be given one dose of a penicillin antibiotic as a capsule. You will be observed afterwards by either a nurse or a physician. The majority of immediate reactions occur within 30 minutes of taking the antibiotic and tend to be mild. You will be observed for at least 1 hour afterwards. The risk of a severe reaction is very low (1/200 000) with taking an oral antibiotic. Once you have “passed” your oral challenge, you will be deemed not allergic. Your risk of developing a penicillin allergy in the future will be the same as anyone else.