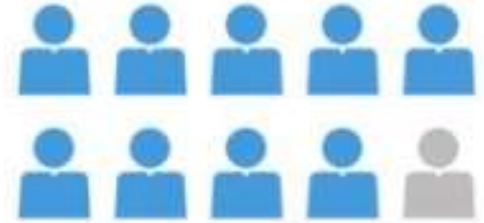


Are You Allergic to Penicillin?

Did you know that **9 out of 10 patients** reporting a penicillin allergy are not truly allergic?

Why?

Many penicillin reactions occur in childhood, often from a rash possibly from a virus, are not a true penicillin allergy. With true penicillin allergy, 8 in 10 are no longer allergic 10 years after the first reaction.



Why is it important to have an accurate drug allergy history?

Penicillin and similar antibiotics in its class are the treatment of choice for many infections.

Your penicillin allergy can be evaluated!

Penicillin allergies should first be evaluated by giving an accurate history of the reaction. If you qualify, you could be referred to an allergist for a penicillin skin test which is a safe and effective procedure for identifying true allergic reactions to penicillin.

I don't need antibiotics now so why should I be evaluated now?

Removing a penicillin allergy can lead to improved long term health costs every time you need a penicillin such as Strep throat, sinus infections or skin infections. This also means decreased costs for hospitalization for infection including both decreased antibiotic and hospital costs. Another reason to be tested now is that when healthy, you are on fewer medications that can block penicillin allergy testing.

There are other benefits...

- Decreased risk of side effects (rash, tendon/joint pain, etc.) from alternative antibiotics.
- Decreased treatment failures for infections where penicillin is preferred.
- Decreased development of bacterial antibiotic resistance such as drug resistant Staph.
- Another reason is that when healthy, you are fewer medications that can block penicillin allergy testing.



References

1. American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (www.AAAAI.org)
2. "Am I Allergic to Penicillin", JAMA Patient Page, January 15, 2019