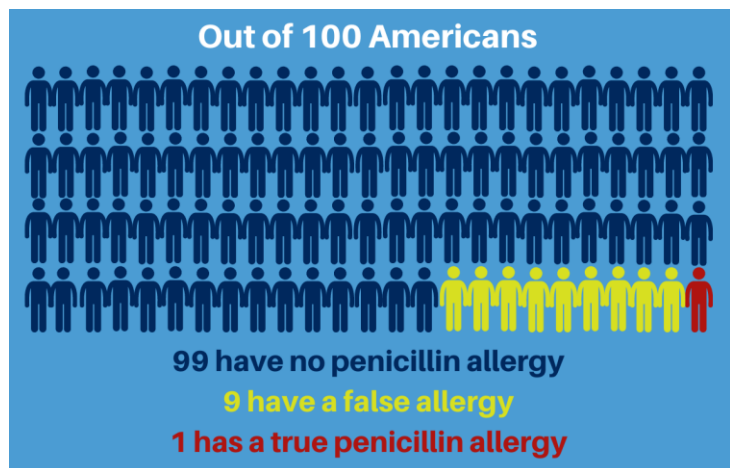


Are You Allergic to Penicillin?

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

Why?

Many childhood penicillin reactions such as a rash may not indicate a penicillin allergy. Even with a true penicillin allergy, many patients are no longer allergic ten years after their 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 tested!

Penicillin allergies should first be evaluated by giving an accurate history of your reaction. If you qualify, you could be referred to an allergist for a penicillin skin test, a safe and

effective procedure for identifying true allergic reactions to penicillin.

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

When appropriate, removing a penicillin allergy from a patient's medical record leads to decreased health costs as a penicillin can be used to treat infections such as Strep throat, sinus infections, or skin infections. This also means lower drug and medical costs if you are hospitalized for an infection. Another reason to get tested now is that when healthy, you are on fewer medications that can block penicillin allergy testing.

Additional benefits of using penicillin when no allergy exists:

- 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

This resource is part of the Penicillin Allergy Assessment Toolkit, a collaboration of the UNC Medical Center's Carolina Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, the UNC Division of Rheumatology, Allergy & Immunology, and the UNC Institute for Healthcare Quality Improvement. See additional resources at <https://www.med.unc.edu/casp/educational-resources/>.

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