

Patient Education - Penicillin Allergy Delabeling:

What is penicillin allergy delabeling?

Penicillin and penicillin-related antibiotics are used to treat infections. Many people are labeled as allergic to these medications, but studies show that over 90% of reported penicillin allergies are not true allergies. Delabeling is the process of removing an incorrect allergy label to ensure patients can safely receive the most effective antibiotics.

Why is delabeling Important?

- Avoids unnecessary use of alternative antibiotics that may be less effective or have more side effects
- Reduces the risk of antibiotic resistance
- Ensures the best treatment for infections
- Can lead to lower healthcare costs and fewer hospital stays

What happens during the oral amoxicillin challenge?

After your doctor evaluates the risk of your penicillin allergy and determines that your history is consistent with a low risk of a true penicillin allergy, you will be given amoxicillin (a medication in the penicillin class) by mouth and watched for signs of an allergic reaction.

- Your pharmacist will answer any questions you have about the oral amoxicillin challenge before starting.
- Your vital signs including temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate will be taken.
- Your nurse will give you the amoxicillin by mouth.
- After 30 minutes and again after 60 minutes, your nurse will take vital signs.
- Throughout this time, we will watch you for any allergic reaction symptoms.

Tell your nurse if you begin to have difficulty breathing, develop a rash, vomit, or if you have any other reaction.

What happens after the oral amoxicillin challenge?

If you do **not pass** the oral amoxicillin challenge:

- Your provider will treat the reaction.
- Your allergy will NOT be removed from your medical record.
- You should NOT receive penicillins without the approval of an allergy specialist.

If you **pass** the oral amoxicillin challenge:

- Your healthcare provider has determined that you can take penicillin antibiotics if needed.
- We will remove your penicillin allergy from your medical record.
- **You can tell other healthcare providers and pharmacists that your penicillin allergy was removed from the medical record as you have passed an oral amoxicillin challenge.**
- Other antibiotics within a class called “beta-lactams” are also safe to receive if you have no pre-existing allergies beta-lactam allergies (e.g. Keflex).
- DO NOT re-label yourself as having an allergy to penicillin unless something new happens after you take penicillins in the future.

Note: 5% of patients develop a delayed rash, 3-10 days after amoxicillin administration. Most often, this is caused by a virus, not by the drug, and is a harmless side effect that only affects the skin and will resolve on its own. If the rash changes to hives, becomes itchy, lasts longer than 6 days, or progresses to more severe signs and symptoms, seek medical attention.