

Did You Know?

- Penicillin allergy has been linked to longer and costlier hospital stays.
- Ninety percent of patients who claim a penicillin allergy are not truly allergic. They can safely take penicillin and related antibiotics.
- Patients with a penicillin allergy are more likely to be prescribed other antibiotics. These may be more expensive, less effective and more likely to cause greater side effects.
- Some alternative antibiotics can lead to severe diarrhea caused by a germ called *Clostridium difficile*, also known as *C.diff*.

To discuss penicillin skin testing with an allergist or to set up an appointment:

Allergy, Immunology and Rheumatology Office Locations

Rochester/Alexander Park
222 Alexander St.
Ste. 3000
Rochester, NY 14607

Greece
2300 West Ridge Rd.
Fifth Floor
Rochester, NY 14626

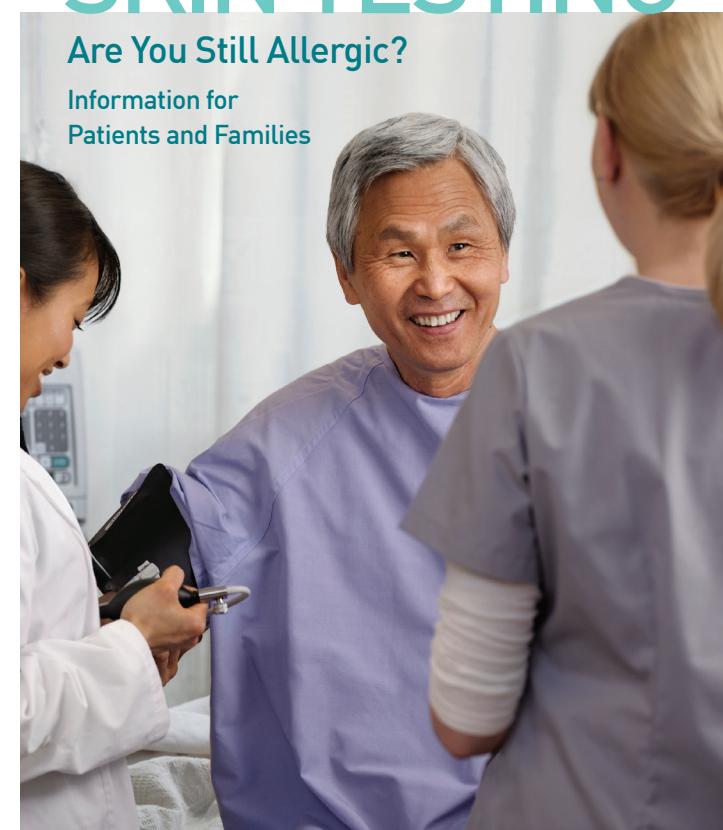
Penfield/Linden Oaks
10 Hagen Dr.
Ste. 20
Rochester, NY 14625

P 585.922.8350
F 585.922.8355

PENICILLIN SKIN TESTING

Are You Still Allergic?

Information for
Patients and Families



Your healthcare team thinks penicillin skin testing may be right for you.



What you should know about your penicillin allergy

Penicillin allergy is the most common medication allergy. However, up to 90 percent of patients who think they are allergic to penicillin may be able to take penicillin-based antibiotics.

The most common reasons are:

- Patients lose their allergy to penicillin over time.
- The initial reaction was not caused by penicillin.

Penicillin skin testing is the best way to determine if you are still allergic to penicillin.

A test can help if, in the past, penicillin has given you:

Rashes

Itching

Hives

Swelling in your face or throat

Low blood pressure

How do penicillin allergy skin tests work?

There are two types of skin tests. In the first, a drop of penicillin is pricked or scratched on the surface of your arm. If you are allergic, you will have a small spot of redness or itching where the penicillin was placed.

If the test is negative, we will give you a second test. For this test, we will inject a small amount of penicillin into the skin of your upper arm.

How long does it take to get skin test results?

For both types of skin tests, positive reactions such as redness and itching at the test spot usually appear within 15 minutes. If both tests are negative, you will receive a test dose of penicillin in the allergy office. You will be monitored for an allergic reaction for 30 minutes.

If your penicillin skin test is negative and you have no reaction to your test dose, you are no longer allergic to penicillin. Your chance of an allergic reaction to penicillin-based antibiotics is as low as it is for most people.

What are the benefits of penicillin skin testing?

Knowing if you are allergic to penicillin is important. For many illnesses, penicillin antibiotics are the best treatment options available.

- Penicillin antibiotics are often less expensive than other antibiotics.
- Other kinds of antibiotics may cause side effects.
- Antibiotics without penicillin may lead to drug resistance (commonly called "superbugs"), which may make antibiotics less effective in the future.

How much does penicillin skin testing cost?

The cost of penicillin skin testing depends on your insurance plan. Contact your insurance company to learn more.

Medications to avoid before penicillin skin testing

Certain medications may interact with penicillin allergy testing. You will receive a complete list of these medications from the allergy office once you make an appointment. It is important to talk to your primary care doctor or allergist before stopping your medications.