

## **Penicillin Allergy Evaluation – Commonly Asked Questions**

Penicillin is an effective medication used to treat bacterial infections. Alternative medications used in place of penicillin can put you or your child at greater risk of becoming immune to a stronger medication that could be needed to treat infection in the future.

### **What is the benefit of having this evaluation?**

Having an evaluation for penicillin allergy will help you determine if you or your child is actually at risk for a dangerous reaction or if it would be safe to take this class of medications. If the evaluation is reassuring, you can feel confident about using penicillin in the future. If the evaluation shows the potential for a dangerous kind of reaction to penicillin allergy, you will know for sure that it has to be avoided.

### **When will I get the results?**

The results of the penicillin allergy evaluation will be known on the same day as your appointment, before you even leave the clinic.

### **How long will the evaluation take?**

The evaluation can take 1½ to 2 hours.

### **What is involved in the evaluation? Will it hurt?**

Depending on the type of reaction you or your child had, the evaluation might include allergy skin testing and/or a penicillin challenge. The allergy skin testing involves a small number of scratch tests (like a sharp fingernail scratching the skin) and intradermal tests (fluid is injected underneath the very top layer of the skin using a tiny needle). If the allergy skin testing is negative, a dose of penicillin is given in the clinic and you or your child are monitored for 30-60 minutes.

Sometimes, allergy skin testing isn't needed, especially in children or in adults whose reaction occurred when they were children. In these situations, a very small dose of penicillin is given by mouth. If after 10-15 minutes, there is no reaction, a full dose of penicillin is given and you or your child are monitored for 30-60 minutes.

### **What if a severe reaction occurs?**

The risk of a severe reaction during evaluation for penicillin allergy is very low. However, penicillin allergy evaluation is only done in the Allergy Clinic where the healthcare providers have a lot of experience with treating severe reactions quickly and effectively.

### **Does insurance cover the cost of this evaluation?**

Most insurance plans cover the cost of penicillin allergy testing. You can check with your specific insurance provider to see what your out-of-pocket costs may be. Please be aware that the codes submitted may vary for each individual patient, depending on what testing is needed.

CPT codes may include:	95018 (6 units)	95024 (2 units)
	95004 (2 units)	95076 (1 unit)