# Penicillin Allergy – Patient Guide for Children and Adults

**What is a penicillin allergy?**

* Drugs in the penicillin family, such as penicillin, amoxicillin, and Augmentin, are antibiotics that treat bacterial infections.
* Drugs in the penicillin family are often the best antibiotics to treat many bacterial infections.
* Some people are allergic to penicillin. Serious penicillin allergies usually happen within hours of taking the antibiotic. These include:
	+ Swelling of the throat, tongue, lips, or eyes
	+ Wheezing or trouble breathing
	+ A raised itchy rash, known as hives
* Other very rare serious allergies can happen after you have been on antibiotics for days or weeks and include a rash that leads to peeling or blistering, sometimes so bad that you need to be hospitalized.
* Most reactions to penicillin are less serious, such as a rash that starts days or weeks after taking an antibiotic and goes away on its own.
* If you had a reaction to penicillins, avoid them until you talk to your healthcare provider. 95% of people who have a penicillin allergy listed in their chart can tolerate penicillin. Of people with true penicillin allergies, 80% of these allergies go away after 10 years.
	+ If you have a serious reaction, you may need to avoid these medicines in the future.
	+ If you had a more mild reaction, you can usually take these medicines again.
* Penicillin allergies are not passed down in families. Just because your parent or sibling is allergic does not mean that you are too.

**What antibiotic reactions are not allergies?**

* Some reactions to antibiotics are not allergies, but side effects like nausea or diarrhea.
* Side effects are usually not harmful and may not occur every time you take that antibiotic or a related one.
* When people take antibiotics when they don’t need them (like for a virus), they may think that they have an allergic reaction to the antibiotic when really a rash or other symptoms may be from the virus itself.

**What should you discuss with your healthcare provider?**

* Your healthcare provider will ask questions to find out whether you have a penicillin allergy, such as:
* What antibiotic were you taking when you had a reaction?
* What was the reaction?
* How long after taking the antibiotic did you have the reaction?
* What antibiotics have you taken since having the reaction?
* If your healthcare provider says you have a penicillin allergy, ask them to tell you which antibiotics you should avoid and which antibiotics are safe to take.
* If your healthcare provider says you don’t have a penicillin allergy when you thought you did, ask them to explain why. You should also ask:
* How to avoid side effects from antibiotics in the future
* If they will remove the allergy from your medical record
* If you need to tell other healthcare providers that you had a reaction to antibiotics

*This document is intended to provide health-related information so that you may be better informed. It is not a substitute for your healthcare provider's medical advice and should not be relied upon for treatment for specific medical conditions.*

# Directions for Adding Your Logo to Your Document

If you chose to add a logo to this document, you can place it in the footer, below the article development content.

Steps:

1. Open the footer section (either double click in the footer section of the document or go to the “Insert” tab **→** select the drop-down menu for “Footer”**→** and click on “Edit Footer”).
2. Make sure your cursor is below the bottom line (or wherever you want your logo).
3. Go to the “Insert” tab.
4. Click on “Pictures” from the “Insert” tab.
5. A window will pop up so you can search your computer for the logo. Select your logo (.jpg or .png format) and click the insert button.
6. Your logo will appear in your footer. If you are happy with the placement, skip step 7.
7. \*\* If you want to move the logo image around, click on the logo → go to the
“Format” tab → click on the “Wrap Text” drop-down menu → and select “In front of text.” This formatting will allow you to move the logo freely around the screen.
8. When you are satisfied with the placement of the logo, exit the footer section (either double click outside of the footer area or go to the “Design” tab → and click the “Close header and footer” button).