

## DID YOU KNOW...

you might be able to take penicillin safely later in life?

80% of adverse effects related to penicillin **DISAPPEAR** over time.

## Why is penicillin important?

Compared to other antibiotics, penicillin can be more effective, less likely to result in superbug bacteria such as MRSA<sup>1</sup> and VRE<sup>2</sup>, and has a lower risk of causing *C. difficile* infections – a sometimes severe and difficult to treat cause of diarrhea.



## BE ANTIBIOTIC WISE.

If you think you're allergic to penicillin, talk to your doctor!

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## ALLERGIC to PENICILLIN?

THINGS you need to **KNOW...**

<sup>1</sup> MRSA - methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*

<sup>2</sup> VRE - vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus*

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## What is penicillin?

Penicillin is one of the first antibiotic drugs discovered. It belongs to an important group of antibiotics called beta ( $\beta$ )-lactam antibiotics. This family of antibiotics are very effective at dealing with common bacterial infections.

Penicillin is relatively inexpensive and is widely used to treat skin, ear, sinus and upper respiratory tract infections such as bronchitis or laryngitis.

### DID YOU KNOW...

Penicillin is an effective antibiotic choice for common bacterial infections?

Other antibiotics can be **LESS EFFECTIVE, MORE HARMFUL, and have more SIDE EFFECTS.**

## Do you have a penicillin allergy?

While you may have experienced certain reactions after taking penicillin in the past, you might not have a true allergy. Rather, these reactions could be adverse effects related to penicillin, and 80% of these adverse effects disappear over time. This means that most people who had penicillin issues in the past can take penicillin safely later in life.

### DID YOU KNOW...

Penicillin allergy is very rare?

**FEWER** than 5 in **10,000** people have a **TRUE ALLERGY**;  
**LESS** than **1%** of people experience **OTHER ADVERSE EFFECTS** from penicillin.

## Overusing antibiotics

When people report that they have a penicillin allergy, their healthcare providers will rightfully avoid prescribing penicillin and related antibiotics. This can result in the unnecessary overuse of other, more powerful antibiotics.

While these drugs are powerful tools, overusing them can cause bacteria to develop resistance, meaning that these same antibiotics may not work in the future. Bacteria that have developed antibiotic resistance are known as superbugs and are very difficult to treat.

## What you can do

Before asking to be prescribed a different antibiotic, talk to your doctor! They will be able to evaluate your allergy, or refer you to an allergist.