Penicillin Allergy Guide

This is a guide for health professionals to use in an emergency if there is reasonable evidence of an unspecified penicillin allergy, when a patient has not yet been assessed by a specialist for penicillin allergy.

Contraindicated
In severe penicillin allergy (e.g. anaphylaxis, bronchospasm, urticaria, angioedema), avoid ALL penicillins, cephalosporins and other beta-lactam antibiotics.

- Ampicillin
- Amoxicillin
- Amoxicillin/clavulanic acid (e.g. Augmentin®)
- Benzathine penicillin
- Benzylpenicillin (e.g. penicillin G)
- Phenoxymethylpenicillin (e.g. penicillin V)
- Dicloxacillin
- Flucloxacillin
- Piperacillin/tazobactam (e.g. Tazocin®)
- Ticarcillin/clavulanic acid (e.g. Timentin®)
- Cefaclor
- Cefepime
- Cefotaxime
- Cefoxitin
- Ceftazidime
- Ceftriaxone
- Cefuroxime
- Cephalixin
- Cepazolin

Caution
In non-severe penicillin allergy (e.g. mild rash) use carbapenems with caution.
In severe penicillin allergy (e.g. anaphylaxis) avoid carbapenems and seek specialist advice.

- Doripenem, ertapenem, imipenem, Meropenem

Considered Safe
In the absence of other contraindications, use non-beta lactam antibiotics when there is reasonable evidence of penicillin allergy.

- Aztreonam
- Azithromycin, erythromycin, roxithromycin, clarithromycin
- Ciprofloxacin, norfloxacin, moxifloxacin
- Clindamycin, lincomycin
- Doxycycline, minocycline, tigecycline
- Gentamicin, tobramycin, amikacin
- Linezolid
- Metronidazole
- Trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole
- Vancomycin

Notes:
- Some reactions (e.g. nausea) are not considered allergies and do not warrant prohibiting penicillin use.
- Refer patients with suspected penicillin allergy to a clinical immunology/allergy specialist for assessment.
- Record patient’s drug allergy details in the ASCIA Action Plan for Drug (Medication) Allergy and ASCIA Record for Drug (Medication) Allergy, which should both be included in the allergy section of the patient’s health record.
- In hospitals contact ward pharmacist, clinical immunology/allergy or infectious diseases specialist for any concerns.

This document has been adapted by ASCIA with permission from Pharmacy Department, Women’s and Children’s Hospital Adelaide SA.

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