**NOTE:** The below internal communications material is a template meant to be used as guidance and customized according to your organization’s needs. This can be used as an e-mail blast, newsletter, etc.

**Is it a viral rash or a true penicillin allergy?**

It’s hard to distinguish the cause of raised hives or a prickly red rash across the skin following use of an antibiotic such as penicillin. These hives and rashes can develop for a host of reasons such as a viral illness, ear infection, or a trigger from a true penicillin allergy. Since the cause of these rashes are often difficult to determine, patients might be labeled as allergic to penicillin.[[1]](#footnote-1)

An unverified penicillin allergy is currently recognized as a significant public health problem, with 9 of 10 patients reporting a penicillin allergy are not truly allergic.[[2]](#footnote-2) It is important for patients and providers to know the facts about penicillin allergies. In the context of the recently launched national antibiotic stewardship initiative, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology encourages more widespread and routine performance of penicillin skin testing for patients with a history of allergy to penicillin or another beta lactam (e.g., ampicillin or amoxicillin).

The healthcare providers at **[insert hospital/physician office name]** are trained in penicillin allergy assessments and can discuss the risk and benefits of testing. We encourage you to join in on National Penicillin Allergy Day—September 28th—to help spread the word and educate on the importance of penicillin allergy testing. Please contact
**[insert physician or department contact information]** to discuss the risks and benefits of testing, and visit <http://www.NationalPenicillinAllergyDay.com> to learn more about how you can get involved.

1. American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology; Drug Allergies: Symptoms. 2017 [Cited 2017 July 26] Available at <http://acaai.org/allergies/types/drug-allergies>

Solensky, Roland. "Penicillin allergy as a public health measure." *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 133.3 (2014): 797-798. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PRP-US-18-000002-003 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)