

β -lactam antibiotics (beta-lactam antibiotics) are antibiotics that contain a beta-lactam ring in their chemical structure. This includes penicillin derivatives (penams), cephalosporins and cephamycins (cephems), monobactams, carbapenems and carbacephems.[

Most β -lactam antibiotics work by inhibiting cell wall biosynthesis in the bacterial organism and are the most widely used group of antibiotics. Until 2003, when measured by sales, more than half of all commercially available antibiotics in use were β -lactam compounds.[3] The first β -lactam antibiotic discovered, penicillin, was isolated from a strain of *Penicillium rubens* (named as *Penicillium notatum* at the time).

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