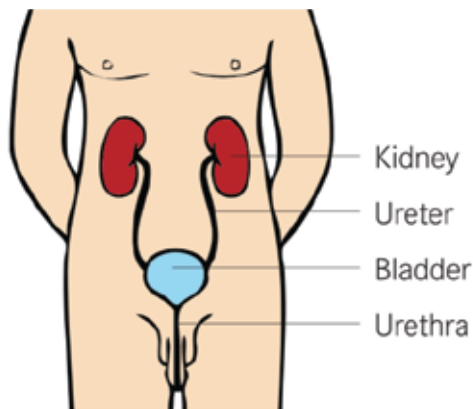


What is a Urinary Tract Infection?

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are a group of infections of the urinary tract.

The most common UTI is *cystitis*, which is an infection of the bladder (where urine is stored). Other UTIs involve the *urethra* (*urethritis*) or kidneys (*pyelonephritis*).



What causes a urinary tract infection?

The most common cause of infection is a type of bacteria that normally lives in the bowel (called *Escherichia coli* or *E.coli*). The bacteria travel up the urethra (a tube from the bladder that urine passes through) to the bladder. Once inside the bladder, these bacteria quickly grow and cause an infection.

Other causes may be related to:

- ▶ An obstruction (blockage) in the flow of urine (such as a large kidney stone or enlarged prostate gland in men)
- ▶ An *indwelling urinary catheter* (IDC)
- ▶ Sexual intercourse, especially in women.

Women are more likely to get *cystitis* than men. Females naturally have a shorter urethra than males, which means that there is less distance for bacteria to travel to reach the bladder. Also, the urethra, vagina and anal opening are very near each other, making it easy for bacteria to be spread from one to the other.

Adults using depends commonly get UTIs. Bacteria from a wet depends can easily cause infection, especially in women. Even people who are regularly changed and cleaned can get a UTI.

What are the symptoms?

- Stinging or burning when passing urine.
- Passing very small amounts of urine.
- Feeling the need or 'urge' to pass urine frequently.
- Feeling that the bladder is still full after passing urine.
- Smelly, cloudy, dark or bloody urine.
- Pain low down in the abdomen or in the lower back or flank pain.
- Feeling unwell with nausea and fever.
- Change in mental status.

Treatment

- A urine sample is necessary to test for infection.
- **Antibiotics** are used to treat the infection. You should take the full course even if you are feeling better, as some bacteria may still be active.

Home care

- Make sure you completely empty your bladder each time you urinate.
- Women should wipe from front to back after going to the toilet.
- Get plenty of rest to give your body a chance to fight the infection.
- If you have pain, take medications as ordered by your doctor.

What to expect



While cystitis can be very uncomfortable, it is easy to treat with antibiotics. Antibiotics act quickly and the symptoms often improve within two days. Other UTIs may need a longer course of antibiotics.

If your symptoms are not getting better, see your local doctor. Some UTIs can become serious *if left untreated, and may lead to a kidney infection which may cause permanent kidney damage.*

Can cystitis happen again?

Some people are likely to suffer from cystitis more than once. There are many reasons why this may happen, ranging from poor toilet habits (*such as wiping from back to front - which transfers bacteria from your bowel to the opening of the urethra*) to having a shorter urethra than normal.

If an infection comes back, it should be treated early. See your local doctor promptly if your symptoms return.

If infections are an ongoing problem you may need to see a **urologist** (a doctor who specialises in urinary problems) for further treatment. Some people need to take antibiotics every day to prevent repeat infections.

Prevention

Here are some simple ways you can try to help prevent another UTI.

- Drink plenty of water and encourage children to do the same.
- Pass urine often, empty your bladder completely and do not 'hold on' when you need to go. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Cranberry juice or capsules may help to prevent future infections if taken every day. They stop the bacteria from sticking to the walls of the bladder. Tell your doctor if you are taking cranberry supplements as they may interfere with some antibiotics. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the use of cranberry capsules before using them.

Advice for women

- Wipe yourself from front to back after going to the toilet.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Avoid synthetic or tight-fitting clothing such as jeans or pantyhose.
- Avoid using soap or perfumed products on your genitals.
- Use a lubricant during sex.

Seeking help



In a **medical emergency** go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance (**dial 911**).

If you have any questions, call your nurse
Advantage Home health Services



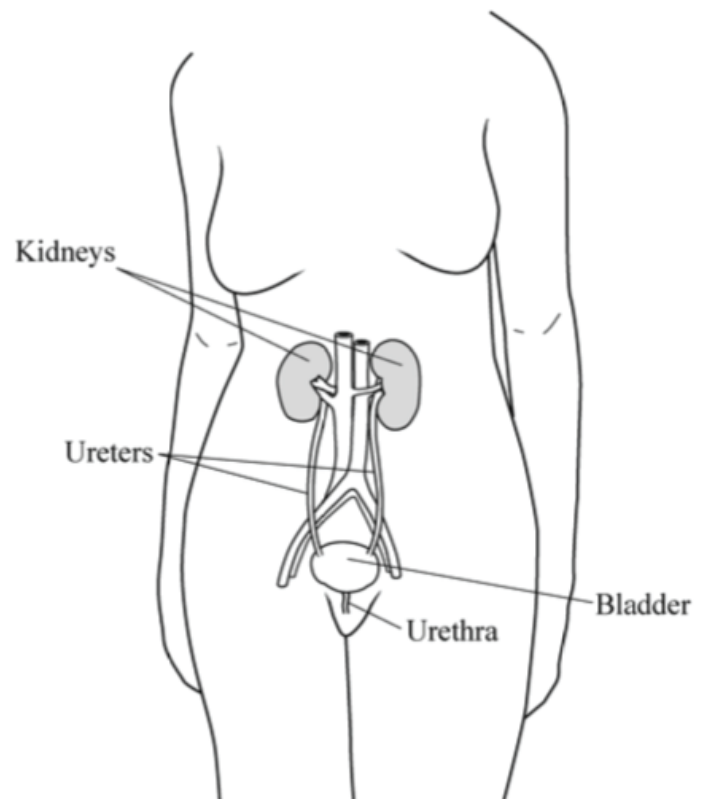
See your local doctor or health care professional if you do not get better, even if you have taken antibiotics. This includes having symptoms such as:

- severe pain in your back and/or loin
- fever or chills
- nausea or vomiting
- blood in your urine
- change in mental status

Care After Treatment

You have been treated for a urinary tract infection (UTI). This infection can affect the bladder, kidneys, and ureters. UTI is caused by bacteria that grow in the urinary tract. This could be a result of:

- Injury to the urethra, the tube that comes from the bladder to the urinary opening
- Poor personal hygiene
- Irritation caused by sexual intercourse
- Not being able to pass your urine caused by drugs, illness, or injury
- Irritation caused by such things as tight slacks, nylon underwear
- Having a weakened immune system that increases a chance for infections
- Kidney stones



Instructions for care

- ✓ Drink at least 8 glasses of fluid every day. Extra fluid helps to rinse the bacteria out of the urinary tract. Water and fruit juices, especially cranberry juice, are helpful.
- ✓ Avoid coffee, tea and soda. Food and fluids that have caffeine can make your symptoms worse
- ✓ Take your antibiotics as prescribed until the bottle is empty. If you do not take all the medicine, your infection will not be cured. If you have any problem with your medicine, please call the office or clinic where you have been treated and ask to speak with the nurse: _____

Urinary tract infection



- Keep your genital area clean, but do not scrub too hard with harsh soaps. Showers are better than tub baths.
- Avoid tight pants or underwear. Wear cotton underwear.
- Use the bathroom to empty your bladder before and after intercourse. Women should rinse the genital area with water from front to back after intercourse.
- Women should always wipe from front to back after a bowel movement or urinating.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of fluids a day. Always include some fluids that are high in Vitamin C, like orange or cranberry juice.

Follow-up care

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these signs, or if the signs get worse.

- Fever greater than 101 degrees
- Nausea, vomiting, chills
- Back pain
- Problems with your medicines



Call Dr. _____ at _____

for an appointment on _____