

UTI

What is a UTI?

A Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) is a name given to a group of infections that occur anywhere in the urinary tract: the kidneys, ureters (which connect the bladder to the kidneys), the bladder and the urethra (which transports urine from the bladder to outside the body). UTIs are the second most common type of infection that can occur in the body and are usually caused by bacteria that enters the body via the urethra.

What are the signs and symptoms of a UTI?

- Increased frequency in urination with little amounts being passed
- Burning when passing urine
- Blood in urine
- Cloudy urine
- Pain and tenderness in the upper back and sides
- Feeling generally unwell
- New onset or worsening of pre-existing confusion / agitation

How to help prevent getting a UTI

- Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily
- Try to empty your bladder fully every time
- Do not try to hold it, or resist the urge to urinate
- Wear loose fitting cotton underwear and avoid Nylon
- Change pads frequently
- Avoid coffee, tea or alcohol
- If possible shower rather than bathe
- Use a separate flannel to wash your genitals morning and night
- Women wipe from front to back after going to the toilet
- Try to avoid lots of sugary foods, eat lots of fruit, vegetables and high fibre foods such as whole grain bread and pasta
- Drink at least one glass of cranberry, orange, or grapefruit juice daily to acidify your urine and kill existing harmful bacteria

You are at higher risk of getting a UTI if you have:

- Diabetes
- Constipation
- Dementia
- Kidney stones or any other condition that obstructs or blocks your urinary tract
- A weakened immune system eg. from chemotherapy or HIV
- A urinary catheter which is a tube inserted into your bladder to drain away the urine

Treating UTIs

See a GP if:

- You have symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI) for the first time
- Your child has symptoms of a UTI
- You're a man with symptoms of a UTI
- You're pregnant and have symptoms of a UTI
- You're caring for an older, frail person who may have symptoms of a UTI
- You have symptoms of a UTI after surgery
- Your symptoms get worse or do not improve within 2 days
- Your symptoms come back after treatment

If a GP thinks you may have a urinary tract infection (UTI), they may do a urine test, although this is not always needed.

A GP may also:

- Offer self-care advice and recommend taking a painkiller
- Give you a prescription for a short course of antibiotics
- Give you a prescription for antibiotics, but suggest you wait for 48 hours before taking them in case your symptoms go away on their own
- It's important to take all the medicine you're prescribed, even if you start to feel better.

References

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis/>