

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)



What Is a UTI?

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is a common infection of the urethra, bladder, or kidney. The urethra is the tube that takes urine out of the body. Bacteria can get into the urethra and travel to the bladder, causing an infection. The infection can also travel to the kidneys. You may be at a higher risk for UTIs if you:

- Are female
- Are sexually active
- Are pregnant
- Use certain types of birth control, like a diaphragm or spermicide
- Have a blocked flow of urine, like from a kidney stone
- Use a urinary catheter
- Have diabetes



What Are the Warning Signs of a UTI?

- Pain when urinating
- Needing to urgently or frequently urinate
- Discomfort in the lower abdomen
- Pain in the back or pelvic area
- Blood in the urine or urine that looks cloudy
- Fever



How Is a UTI Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask about your symptoms.
- In some cases you may need to give a urine sample. The urine sample will help your doctor decide what treatment is best.



How Is a UTI Treated?

- Medicines called antibiotics treat UTIs. It's important to take all of your medicine even if your symptoms go away.
- If your infection doesn't go away or comes back after you finish treatment, you may need more testing.
- Some people get frequent UTIs. Talk with your doctor about treatment options if this is the case.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)



Questions for My Doctor

- How can I prevent a UTI in the future?
- When will my symptoms go away?
- Do I need medicine? How should I take it?
- If I don't take antibiotics, will the infection go away on its own?
- What should I do if I don't feel better after taking the antibiotics?
- Does drinking cranberry juice help?
- Do over-the-counter medicines treat the infection?
- Should I stop having sex when I have a UTI?



Bottom Line

- A urinary tract infection (UTI) occurs when bacteria enter the body through the urethra.
- Symptoms include painful, urgent, or frequent urination.
- Sometimes a urine test is used to check if you have an infection.
- Antibiotics will kill the bacteria causing the infection. Sometimes, more serious infections need other treatments.

For More Information

- **Medline Plus:**
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/urinarytractinfections.html
- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases:**
http://kidney.niddk.nih.gov/kudiseases/pubs/uti_ez/
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:**
<http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/urinary-tract-infection.cfm>

Notes:
