



URINARY TRACT INFECTION

A urinary tract infection is a common problem that affects everyone especially females. It is a bacterial infection of the kidneys, bladder or urethra.

An Infection of the urethra is urethritis, a bladder infection is cystitis. If the infection travels up to the ureters to infect the kidneys it is pyelonephritis.

What are the symptoms?

- frequent urge to urinate
- painful, burning feeling in the area of the bladder or urethra
- urgent feeling to urinate
- despite the urge, only small amounts of urine are passed at a time
- feeling of not emptying your bladder
- lower belly discomfort
- urine looks milky or cloudy or reddish
- Other symptoms include: back pain, vomiting, fever, chills, and weakness

How is it diagnosed?

A sample of urine will be collected and tested for bacteria and pus.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to have bloodwork or x-rays done.

How is it treated?

1. Antibiotics or antibacterial drugs will be prescribed to kill the bacteria that caused the infection. It is important to take the full course of medication as prescribed. You may be contacted (usually within 48 hours) if lab results indicate a need to change your antibiotic.
2. Drink lots of fluids to help flush bacteria out of the urethra. Some Doctors recommend cranberry or blueberry juice to slow bacteria growth.
3. In some cases, patients experiencing severe discomfort may be prescribed Pyridium (Phenzopyridine HCL). This drug turns the urine, tears, vaginal secretions bright orange in colour. This may cause staining of contact lens.

Is there anything that may prevent future infections?

- Drink plenty of water every day.
- Urinate every 3-4 hours. Don't resist the urge to urinate. Holding urine in the bladder increases the chance of UTI.
- Practice good hygiene. Females should wipe front to back. This wipes bacteria away from the opening of the urethra.
- Women should urinate before and after sexual intercourse to help clear the urethra of potential infection causing bacteria.
- Showering instead of tub baths may reduce the chance of UTI.
- Avoid using feminine hygiene sprays and scented douches, which may irritate the urethra.

When do I need to return to the ER or MD?

- Worsening back pain
- If you are unable to urinate
- Fever
- Vomiting-unable to keep fluids down

If you are still having symptoms within 2 days of treatment you should call your doctor or return to the ER.