



# Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

**Urinary tract infections (UTIs)** are ones that occur in any organs that make up the urinary tract. The kidneys filter waste products from the blood and make urine. Ureters connect the kidney to the bladder. This holds urine until it is passed.

## Signs & Symptoms

- A strong need to pass urine.
- You pass urine more often than usual.
- A sharp pain or burning feeling when you pass urine.
- Bloody or cloudy urine.
- It feels like your bladder is still full after you pass urine.
- Pain in the abdomen, back, or sides.
- Chills. Fever.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- A change in mental status, especially if you are over age 70.

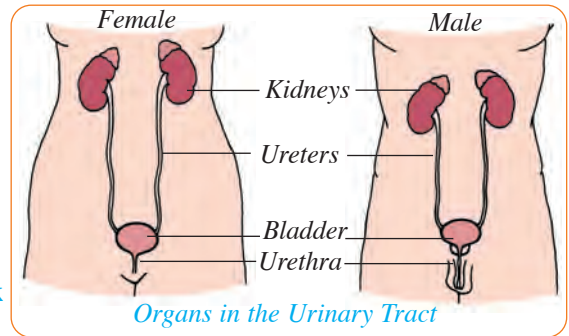
Sometimes there are no symptoms with a UTI.

## Causes

UTIs result when bacteria infect any part of the urinary tract. The bladder is the most common site.

## Persons at Greater Risk for UTIs

- Sexually active females.
- Females who use a diaphragm for birth control.
- Males and females who have had UTIs in the past.
- Anyone with a condition that doesn't allow urine to pass freely. An enlarged prostate gland (in males) and kidney stones are examples.




## Treatment

An antibiotic is prescribed to treat the specific infection. Pain relievers are taken as needed. If you get UTIs often, your doctor may order medical tests to find out the problem.

## Questions to Ask

Do you have these **symptoms of a kidney infection**?


- Fever and shaking chills.
- Pain in one or both sides of your mid back.
- Nausea and vomiting.

YES 

NO

Do you have any of these **symptoms of a bladder infection**?

- It burns or stings when you pass urine.
- You pass urine a lot more often than usual, often in small amounts.
- Your urine is bloody, cloudy, or foul-smelling.
- You have pain in the abdomen or over your bladder.

YES 

NO

*Flowchart continued on next page*



## Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs), Continued

Have you had more than 3 bladder infections within 6 months or more than 4 bladder infections in the same year?

YES



NO

After taking prescribed medicine for a UTI, do symptoms not clear up over 3 days? Or, did the prescribed medicine give you side effects, such as a skin rash or a vaginal yeast infection?

YES



NO



## Self-Care / Prevention

### To Treat a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

- Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day.
- Don't have alcohol, spicy foods, and caffeine.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Take an over-the-counter (OTC) medicine for pain or one that relieves pain and spasms that come with a bladder infection (e.g., Uristat).  
{**Note:** Uristat helps with symptoms, but doesn't get rid of the infection. See your doctor for diagnosis and treatment.}
- Go to the bathroom as soon as you feel the urge. Empty your bladder all the way.
- Don't have sex until the infection is cleared up.

### To Help Prevent UTIs

- Drink plenty of water and other fluids every day.
- Empty your bladder as soon as you feel the urge.
- Drink a glass of water before you have sex. Go to the bathroom as soon as you can after sex.
- If you're prone to UTIs, don't take bubble baths.
- If you're female, wipe from front to back after using the toilet. This helps keep bacteria away from the opening of the urethra. If you use a diaphragm, clean it after each use. Have your health care provider check your diaphragm periodically to make sure it fits properly.



*Drink water and other fluids that do not have caffeine.*



### Get more information from:

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)  
[www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)