



Urinary Tract Infection

What is a urinary tract infection (UTI)?

A urinary tract infection or bladder infection is a bacterial infection of the urinary tract system. It usually develops in the lower part of the urinary tract (bladder and urethra) and if it is not treated may move into the upper urinary tract (ureters and kidneys).

How do you get a UTI?

A urinary tract infection occurs when bacteria that normally live in the intestines and on the genitals get into the urethra. These bacteria travel into the bladder and cause an infection.

What are the symptoms of a UTI?

Not everyone with a UTI has symptoms, but most people experience some of the following:

- You feel the need to urinate(pee) but only a few drops come out
- You are urinating more frequently than usual
- You have pain or burning when you urinate
- There is blood in the urine
- You have cloudy, bad smelling or blood in the urine
- You have pain in the lower abdomen
- Back pain
- Fever or chills

How do you get tested for a UTI?

To find out if you have a UTI, your health care provider will ask you to give a mid-stream urine sample in a sterile container. This will be sent to a laboratory for testing. The sample is tested for pus and bacteria.

How is a UTI treated?

A UTI is treated with antibiotics. It is important to finish all the antibiotics, even if you feel better. If a persistent bladder infection is not treated, in some cases it can get worse. Make sure you see your health care provider.

Is follow up necessary?

It is important to go see your health care provider if you don't feel better after taking the antibiotics as sometimes the infection may spread to the kidneys.

How do you prevent a UTI?

- Drink lots of water everyday
- Urinate before and after sexual intercourse
- Don't resist the urge to urinate, do so when you feel the need
- Empty your bladder completely
- Wipe from the front to the back after going to the bathroom
- Avoid deodorant tampons, pads or feminine hygiene sprays which can irritate the urethra
- Avoid douching
- Take showers instead of tub baths

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