

URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Bacteria that normally reside in our colon are the most common organisms found in a urinary tract infection. Since women have shorter urethras they tend to be more susceptible to infections that start in the bladder. If the infection has a chance, it may spread up higher into the kidneys and cause a lot more pain and potentially damage the kidneys. Some women have “stickier” bladder walls and get a lot more infections than average. Some also have more pain than others, for them we have a colorful medication, phenazopyridine (Pyridium) which can numb the bladder directly as it passes through the bladder.



If the culture we sent to the lab grows a typical bacteria and it is sensitive to the medicine we prescribed for you today, you should be feeling better in a few days. If you had pink or red urine with the infection and it clears up we will be happy! Sometimes there is burning with urination and the culture doesn't grow anything and that could be an STD like Chlamydia or gonorrhea. We have specific tests for that (and treatment!)

If you keep having symptoms with no improvement, or the blood in your urine continues, we may need to look at the kidneys with an ultrasound or a quick CT scan of the kidney and bladder. Sometimes we need a urologist to do a cystoscopy where a fiberoptic tube is put in your bladder (through your urethra). Blood is most commonly just from an infection but it could also signify kidney stones or even a tumor in the bladder. Typical symptoms of the three areas here that get infected are:

Bladder (cystitis)

- Pelvic pressure
- Lower abdomen discomfort
- Frequent, painful urination
- Blood in urine

Urethra (urethritis)

- Burning with urination

Kidneys (pyelonephritis)

- Upper back and side pain
- High fever
- Shaking and chills
- Nausea
- Vomiting

So to get better:

- Take all the medicine prescribed for you. Do not stop taking them just when you start feeling better.
- Drink plenty of fluids – e.g. Cranberry juice, Gatorade or water.
- Follow up if requested to be sure the infection is completely gone.

Prevent the next UTI by keeping well hydrated! For those who are not sure if they drink enough: look at your urine when you go to the bathroom. The color should be light yellow; if your urine looks darker like apple juice you have not been drinking enough. Also, wearing a swimsuit all day might be a problem for some women, so for them switching to loose-fitting clothes or cotton panties may help. Some women find that sexual intercourse is responsible for their UTIs. In the old days we called it honeymoon cystitis. If that is how you get your infections, be sure to get up and urinate after intercourse. If that does not help, we can prescribe an antibiotic that can be taken as a single pill just before or after intercourse.

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