

# Urinary Tract Infection Fact Sheet

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

- ❖ **What is** urinary tract infection?
- ❖ What **causes** a urinary tract infection?
- ❖ What are the **symptoms** of a urinary tract infection?
- ❖ Are there **tests** for tract infection?
- ❖ How is urinary tract infection **treated**?
- ❖ Is there a way to **avoid** urinary tract infections?

## SOURCES:

National Institutes of Health

- ❖ [Urinary tract infection in adults](#)
- ❖ [What I need to know about urinary tract infections](#)

US Department of Health and Human Services

- ❖ [Urinary tract infection](#)

National Institutes of Health

- ❖ [Urinary tract infections](#)



## What is a urinary tract infection?

- ❖ The urinary tract has four parts:
  - Kidneys—collect waste from blood to make urine.
  - Ureters (YOOR-uh-turz)— two tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.
  - Bladder—sack-like organ that stores urine.
  - Urethra (yoo-REE-thruh)—a tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body.
- ❖ A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection in part of the urinary tract.
  - A UTI in the bladder can be annoying or painful.
  - If a UTI spreads to the kidneys, it can be a serious problem.



## What causes a urinary tract infection?

- ❖ Bacteria (bak-TIHR-ee-uh) are a type of germ.
- ❖ Normally, urine does not contain any bacteria.
- ❖ A UTI occurs when bacteria get into the urinary tract.
- ❖ Most often, UTIs are caused by bacteria from the digestive tract.
- ❖ The bacteria first travel to the urethra.
- ❖ Infection in the urethra is called urethritis.
- ❖ Bacteria can move to the bladder and cause a bladder infection.
- ❖ Bladder infections are also called cystitis.
- ❖ If the bacteria pass through the ureters up to the kidney, they can cause a kidney infection.
- ❖ Another name for kidney infection is pyelonephritis (pi-LO-nef-rite-is).
  - Pyelonephritis can be serious. Sometimes people with pyelonephritis need to stay in the hospital for several days.



## What are the symptoms of a urinary tract infection?

- ❖ Some common symptoms of UTI are:
  - Pain or stinging when passing urine.
  - A strong urge to pass urine.
  - Pressure in the lower belly.
  - Urine that smells bad.
  - Urine that looks milky, cloudy, or reddish in color. If you see blood in your urine, tell a doctor right away.



- Feeling tired or shaky.
- Fever.



### Are there tests for urinary tract infection?

- ❖ Usually two tests are done to check for a UTI.
  - Urinalysis—this test looks for cells and certain chemicals in the urine.
  - Urine culture—this test checks for bacteria in the urine.



### How is a urinary tract infection treated?

- ❖ UTIs are treated with antibiotics (an-tuh-beye-OT-iks).
- ❖ Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria.
- ❖ A health care provider must write a prescription for antibiotics.
- ❖ It is important to take all the medicine, even if the symptoms go away before the medicine is gone.
- ❖ Many people feel better in one or two days.
- ❖ Small infections need three days of medicine. Larger infections need seven days or more of medicine.
- ❖ It is important to tell the health care provider about any allergies to medicines.



### Is there a way to avoid urinary tract infection?

- ❖ Sometimes changing daily habits can prevent UTIs.
- ❖ If you get UTIs a lot, try these ideas.
  - Drink lots of fluid. Water is best. Try for 6 to 8 glasses a day. Fluid can wash the bacteria from your system.
  - Drink cranberry juice or take vitamin C.
  - Urinate frequently. Go to the bathroom when you first feel the urge.
  - Urinate soon after sex. This can wash away bacteria that might have gotten into the urethra during sex.
  - After using the toilet, always wipe from front to back. This is very important after a bowel movement.
  - Wear cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes. This helps keep the area dry.
  - Don't use the diaphragm or spermicides for birth control.
  - Choose lubricated condoms without spermicides. Or use a lubricant (without spermicides).

