Public Health England

Urinary tract infection (UTI) information leaflet

For women outside care homes with suspected uncomplicated Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs), or uncomplicated recurrent UTIs

Possible urinary symptoms

Frequency: Passing urine more often than usual

Dysuria: Burning pain when passing urine

Urgency: Feeling the need to pass urine immediately

Haematuria: Blood in your urine

Nocturia: Needing to pass urine in the night

Suprapubic pain: Pain in your lower tummy

Other things to consider

Recent sexual history

- Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can have symptoms similar to those of a UTI.
- Inflammation due to sexual activity can feel similar to the symptoms of a UTI.

The outcome

☐ **Mild, or 1 to 2, symptoms and/ or vaginal discharge**

- Antibiotics less likely to help.
- Usually lasts 5 to 7 days.

☑ **Severe, or 3 or more, symptoms and no vaginal discharge**

- Antibiotics are likely to help.

With antibiotics:

- Symptoms should start to improve within 48 hours.
- Symptoms usually last 3 days.

Recommended care

☐ **Self-care and pain relief**

- symptoms are likely to get better on their own.

Antibiotic prescription

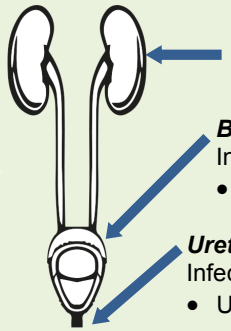
☐ **Immediate** treatment with antibiotics, plus self-care.

☑ Start **delayed or backup** treatment with antibiotics:

- if symptoms get worse
- if symptoms do not get a little better with self-care after 24 to 48 hours

Types of urinary tract infection (UTI)

UTIs are caused by bacteria getting into your urethra or bladder, usually from your gut. Infections may occur in different parts of the urinary tract:



Kidneys (make urine)
Infection in the upper urinary tract
- Pyelonephritis *(pie-lo-nef-right-is)*

Bladder (stores urine)
Infection in the lower urinary tract.
- Cystitis *(sis-tight-is)*

Urethra (takes urine out of the body)
Infection or inflammation in the urethra
- Urethritis- *(your-ith-right-is)*

Self-care to help yourself get better more quickly

- Drink enough fluids to stop you feeling thirsty. Aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses including water, decaffeinated and sugar-free drinks.
- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen at regular intervals for pain relief, if you've had no previous side effects.
- You could try taking cranberry capsules or cystitis sachets. These are effective for some women. There is currently little evidence to support their use.
- Consider the risk factors in the 'Options to help prevent UTI' column to reduce future UTIs.

When should you get help?

Contact your GP practice or contact NHS 111 (England,), NHS 24 (Scotland dial 111), or NHS direct (Wales dial 0845 4647)

The following symptoms are possible signs of serious infection and should be assessed urgently.

Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are.

1. You have shivering, chills and muscle pain.
2. You feel confused, or are very drowsy.
3. You have not passed urine all day.
4. You are vomiting.
5. You see blood in your urine.
6. Your temperature is above 38˚C or less than 36˚C.
7. You have kidney pain in your back just under the ribs.
8. Your symptoms get worse.
9. Your symptoms are not starting to improve a little within 48 hours of taking antibiotics.

Options to help prevent a UTI

It may help you to consider these risk factors:

Stop the spread of bacteria from your gut into your bladder: Wipe from front (vagina) to back (bottom) when you go to the toilet.

Avoid waiting to pass urine: Pass urine as soon as you need a wee.

Wee after having sex to flush out any bacteria that may be near the opening to the urethra

Wash the external vagina area with water before and after sex to wash away any bacteria that be near the opening to the urethra

Drink enough fluids to make sure you wee regularly throughout the day, especially during hot weather.

If you have a recurrent UTI, also consider the following

Cranberry products: Some women find these effective, but there is currently little evidence to support this.

After the menopause: You could consider topical hormonal treatment, for example, vaginal creams.

Antibiotic resistance

Antibiotics may not always be needed, only take them after advice from a health professional. This way they are more likely to work if you have a UTI in the future.

Antibiotics taken by mouth, **for any reason,** affect our gut bacteria. These bacteria become resistant to antibiotics we take.

Antibiotic resistance means that the antibiotics **cannot kill that bacteria.**

The gut bacteria that cause UTIs are twice as likely to be antibiotic resistant for **at least 6 months** after you have taken any antibiotic.

Common **side effects** to taking antibiotics include thrush, rashes, vomiting and diarrhoea.

www.antibioticguardian.com

ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN

RCGP Royal College of General Practitioners

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES — Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales

BIA British Infection Association

ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY

SCOTTISH UTI NETWORK