

Urinary Tract Infections

The pain of a urinary tract infection (UTI) can be agonizing. Symptoms such as burning upon urination, lower abdominal pressure and/or cramping, and severe urgency can appear suddenly and escalate rapidly. Other symptoms may be more subtle, like odor or cloudiness to the urine and increased frequency of urinating, even when the bladder is not full.

It's best to visit your doctor the moment the first symptom strikes. If left untreated a UTI could develop into a kidney infection. Remember, there's no need to check your urine for infection on a routine basis *unless* you have symptoms. Symptoms are required to diagnose a UTI. New research is showing that the bladder normally contains some bacteria. Older women in particular tend to have bacteria in the urine routinely. This is not dangerous, and no treatment is needed unless a woman also has symptoms.

Thankfully, until you are able to see a doctor, or until the prescribed treatment starts to work, you have some options to manage the pain. However, there's no over-the-counter *cure* for a UTI. Only a medical provider can prescribe a UTI antibiotic to rid the bacteria causing the infection.

INITIAL RESPONSE

If you're just feeling the first hint of a UTI, you can get ahead of the infection by using an over-the-counter urinary pain reliever to help soothe the discomfort. Commonly available products include the following: AZO Urinary Pain Relief[®], Uristat Ultra Pain Relief[®] and Uricalm Max[®]. Please read all package labeling for disclosure of common side effects and reasons to avoid the medication – when applicable.

DIAGNOSING A UTI

Only a culture of the urine can confirm UTI when symptoms are present. While women are often treated for a UTI based on symptoms alone or preliminary testing, a urine culture is important to differentiate between infectious and non-infectious issues in women with persistent or recurrent symptoms. Additionally, a culture is important to identify the type of bacteria and which antibiotics will be effective in treating the UTI. We offer fast track visits that can be scheduled and completed quickly to evaluate your symptoms and collect urine for culture.

HEALTHY HABITS THAT HELP PREVENT UTI

Once your UTI is treated, a healthy urinary tract can be maintained with probiotics containing cranberry or D-Mannose (examples include AZO Cranberry[®], or AZO Urinary Tract Defense[®], TheraCran One[®], Utiva[®], Ocean Spray Cranberry + Health[®], and Uricalm Cranberry with D-Mannose[®], Uqora[®]). Vitamin C can also help prevent further UTIs. Also, a few simple practices will help you to avoid the pitfalls of recurrence:

- Drinking plenty of water may help to dilute your urine and help flush out bacteria that causes UTIs.
- Avoid coffee, alcohol and soft drinks that contain citrus juices and caffeine. They can irritate your bladder and aggravate your need to urinate.
- Shower instead of taking a bath
- Urinate regularly
- Urinate after sex
- Confirm the vagina is well lubricated prior to sexual activity
- Wipe from front to back after using the bathroom; teach girls to do this when potty training