



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

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Infections of the Lower Urinary Tract (Bladder Infection, Cystitis, Urethritis)

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI):

- Inflammation of the bladder
- Usually caused by bacteria
- Occurs more often in sexually active women
 - Bacteria from vagina or rectum enter the urethra (opening that urine flows from)
 - Especially during intercourse
 - Occurs more commonly with diaphragm users
- Not contagious

Symptoms—May include one or more of the following:

- Frequency of urination
- Burning or painful urination (dysuria)
- Blood in the urine
- Low back or lower abdominal pain
- Excessive urination at night (nocturia)
- Frequent passage of small amounts of urine
- A grabbing sensation at the end of urination

Diagnosis:

- Urinalysis to examine urine for bacteria
- Urine culture may be done to determine type of bacteria (usually E. coli bacteria)

Treatment:

- Antibiotics
 - **Take all medication as prescribed.**
 - **If no relief after 48 hours, contact provider or return to Health Center**
- Pyridium (to relieve discomfort)
 - Colors urine bright red-orange
 - Can discolor tears (be careful if contact lense wearer)
- Increase fluids—8 to 10 glasses per day
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol which may irritate the bladder

If fever, chills, back pain, nausea, or vomiting occur,
RETURN TO THE HEALTH CENTER OR GO TO A HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY.

Prevention:

- Wipe from front to back after bowel movements to avoid contamination
- Empty your bladder often, at least every 3-4 hours
- Empty your bladder before and after sexual intercourse
- Gently, but thoroughly, clean genital area daily with a mild soap
- Do not douche
- Avoid feminine hygiene sprays
- Perfumed powders, “deodorized” tampons and sanitary napkins may cause irritation
- Avoid excessively tight clothing
- Be aware that physical activity such as horseback, bicycle or motorcycle riding may traumatize your urethra

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