

DESCRIPTION

Urinary tract infections are caused by bacteria and can occur in any part of the urinary tract, including the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. They occur more often in women than in men and can be a recurrent problem.

CAUSE

A variety of bacteria can infect the bladder, but most commonly, the organism responsible is Escherichia Coli. E. Coli is a bacterium present in the large intestine of all healthy men and women.

Women are more vulnerable to urinary tract infections because the urethra is shorter in women than in men, thus bacteria have a shorter distance to travel. In addition, the urethra is nearer the rectum in women, so bacteria from the rectum have easier access to the urethra. Having sex can also contribute to urinary tract infections, because bacteria can be pushed up into the urethra.

SYMPTOMS

- Burning sensation when you urinate
- Feeling the urge to urinate more often than usual
- Feeling the urge to urinate but not being able to
- Leaking a little urine
- Cloudy, dark, smelly or bloody urine

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of urinary tract infection is usually made on the basis of symptoms and laboratory testing of a urine specimen.

TREATMENT

Antibiotics are usually prescribed for urinary tract infections. It is very important to complete the full course of medicine prescribed, even though symptoms subside after taking medication for 2 or 3 days. If symptoms have not improved after 3 days on medications, return to Student Health Services, as the antibiotic you are taking may not be effective against the infecting organism. While on medication, drink 8 or more large glasses of water a day to dilute the urine and flush out the infection.

Abstain from intercourse until symptoms have completely subsided. If pain with urination is severe, urinating in the shower or tub or pouring water over the labia while urinating may help.

It is a common procedure to have a follow-up urine test to ensure that the infection is completely gone.

This follow-up urine test is usually done a few days after completing the medication. This is especially important if you have had previous urinary tract infections.

PREVENTION

- Make sure you use some form of lubrication (either natural or a water-soluble lubricant such as KY Jelly or Lubrifax) during intercourse.
- Wipe from front to back after a bowel movement, using a clean tissue for each wipe.
- If you have anal intercourse, DO NOT follow it with vaginal intercourse.

(Cont. on Back)



- Wear clean cotton panties.
- Drink plenty of water each day. Drinking cranberry juice may also help.
- Urinate immediately after intercourse to wash away any bacteria.
- Always urinate when you have the urge—do not hold it!
- Build up resistance to infection—rest and a good diet are important in maintaining body resistance to infection.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: