

Bladder Infection

Most urinary tract infections are caused by bacteria. Any part of your urinary tract can become infected. The urinary tract includes the kidney, ureters, bladder and urethra. Infections of the bladder are the most common.

Women tend to have urinary tract infections (UTI's) more often than men because bacteria can reach the bladder more easily in women. The urethra is shorter in women than in men, so bacteria have a shorter distance to travel.

Having sex may cause urinary tract infections in women because bacteria can be pushed into the urethra. Using a diaphragm can lead to infections because diaphragms push against the urethra and make it harder to completely empty the bladder. The urine that stays in the bladder is more likely to grow bacteria and cause infections.

Possible signs of a bladder infection include:

- A burning sensation when you urinate
- Feeling like you need to urinate more often than usual
- Feeling the urge to urinate but not being able to
- Leaking a little urine
- Urine that smells bad
- Cloudy, dark or bloody urine

Urinary tract infections are treated with antibiotics for 3-7 days. The symptoms typically go away 1 to 2 days after starting the medicine. Your doctor may also prescribe some medicine that can help with the cramping in your bladder called Pyridium. This medication can cause your urine to turn bright orange, so don't be alarmed by the color when you urinate. Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily. Avoid caffeine and alcohol during treatment. Drink cranberry juice to acidify the urine. Some medications are more effective when the urine is acidic.

Tips to prevent urinary tract infections:

- Urinate within 15 minutes after intercourse
- Use a water-soluble lubricant such as K-Y lubricating jelly during intercourse
- Take showers instead of tub baths
- Drink 8 glasses of water every day. Avoid caffeine.
- Wipe from front to back after bowel movements

Contact our clinic or go to the Emergency Room if you develop nausea, vomiting, fevers, chills, mid back or flank pain or worsening of your symptoms. Also return if there is no improvement in 2-3 days.

