

URINARY TRACT INFECTION

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection of the bladder and sometimes the kidneys. If the bladder is infected, it is called cystitis. If the kidneys are infected, it is called pyelonephritis. It is important to treat UTIs so that the kidneys are not damaged.

SYMPTOMS

- * painful urination
- * frequent urination
- * dribbling of urine
- * fever
- * vomiting
- * an urgent need to urinate
- * daytime and nighttime wetting
- * foul smelling urine
- * stomachaches

CAUSE

Urinary tract infections are caused by bacteria. The bacteria usually enter the bladder by traveling up the urethra (the opening where urine leaves the body). If the opening of the urethra becomes irritated, bacteria can enter.

TREATMENT

- Antibiotics – This type of medicine will kill the bacteria that are causing the UTI. If the medicine is liquid, store at the recommended temperature and shake the bottle well before you measure a dose. Use a measuring device to be sure that you give the right amount. Try not to forget any doses. If your child goes to school or a babysitter, arrange for someone to give the afternoon dose if necessary. Give the medicine until all the pills are gone or the bottle is empty. Even though your child will feel better in a few days, give all the antibiotic doses to keep the UTI from flaring up again.
- Extra Fluids – Encourage your child to drink extra fluids to help clear the infection. No special fluid is necessary, and cranberry juice offers no advantage over other fluids.
- Fever and Pain Relief – Give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol, etc.) if a fever over 102 degrees F (39 degrees C) develops or if urination is quite painful.

FURTHER EVALUATION AFTER A UTI

Certain children with documented UTIs require further evaluation of the urinary tract to be sure the infection is not a sign of an underlying problem. If your child requires further testing, your doctor or nurse practitioner will discuss this with you.

- Instructions for Collecting a Midstream, Clean-Catch Urine Specimen at Home – If we ask you to bring a urine sample to the office, try to collect the urine when your child first urinates in the morning. Use a jar that has been sterilized by boiling for 10 minutes.

GIRLS: Wash off the genital area several times with cotton balls and warm water (after a bath is a good time). Your child should then sit on the toilet seat with her legs spread widely so that the labia (skin folds of the vagina) don't touch. After she starts to urinate into the toilet, place the clean container directly in line with the stream of urine. Remove it after you have collected a few ounces, but before she stops urinating.

BOYS: If uncircumcised, retract the foreskin if possible. Wash and dry the penis (after a bath is a good time). After your child begins to urinate into the toilet, direct the midstream flow into the clean container. Remove the container after you have collected a few ounces but before he stops urinating.

Refrigerate the urine until you leave for our office. Keep the specimen chilled while you transport it (put the jar in a plastic bag with some ice) and bring it to the office within two hours of collection if possible.

PREVENTION OF UTIs

- When your child bathes, wash the genital area with water, limit soap.
- Don't put bubble bath, shampoo, or other soaps into the bathwater. Don't let a bar of soap float around the tub. Rinse the genital area well with clear water after bathing or showering.
- Keep bath time less than 15 minutes. Your child should urinate after baths.
- Teach your daughter to wipe herself correctly from front to back, especially after a bowel movement.
- Encourage your child to drink enough fluids each day to keep the urine light-colored.
- Encourage your child to urinate at least every 3 to 4 hours during the day and not "hold back."
- Your daughter should wear loose cotton underpants. Discourage wearing underpants at night. Discourage tight fitting nylon pants.
- Use unscented white toilet paper.
- Avoid fabric softeners, especially dryer sheets.
- Do not use creams or powders on the genital area.

CALL OUR OFFICE IF:

- Fever or painful urination is not gone after your child has been taking an antibiotic for 48 hours.
- Your child is able to pass only very small amounts of urine.
- Your child gets worse while on treatment.
- Your child begins to have vomiting.
- You have other questions or concerns.