THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT URINARY TRACT INFECTION

What is a urinary tract infection (UTI)?
- A UTI is a common infection of the urinary system (i.e., urethra, bladder, ureters, and kidneys).
- It occurs when bacteria at the opening of the urethra ascend to the bladder.
- Infection limited to the urethra is called urethritis.
- Infection that moves from the urethra to the bladder is called cystitis.
- Infection that moves further up the urinary tract to the kidneys is called pyelonephritis.

What factors increase the risk for UTI?
- Being a sexually active adult woman.
- Using a diaphragm or spermicide.
- Having an abnormality of the urinary tract that obstructs the flow of urine (such as a kidney stone or enlarged prostate gland).
- Having a catheter (a tube inserted in the urethra and bladder of people who cannot pass urine or who lack bladder control).
- Having poorly controlled diabetes in postmenopause.

What are common symptoms?
- Painful urination and feeling an urgent need to urinate frequently.
- Urine that contains blood or looks cloudy.
- Discomfort in the lower abdomen and pain in the back or pelvic area.
- Fever may develop.

How is it diagnosed?
- Your doctor may diagnose UTI based on your symptoms or may do additional tests.
- Your urine is checked for evidence of infection with a test called a urinalysis or dipstick.
- A urine culture for bacteria if you are pregnant or are likely to have a kidney infection or resistant bacteria.
- If you have recurrent or resistant infection, your doctor may order tests to determine if your urinary system is normal.

How is it treated?
- Your doctor will prescribe an oral antibacterial drug.
- It is important to take the full course of treatment even if your symptoms disappear.
- Patients with severe kidney infections may need to be hospitalized and receive IV treatments.
- If you have recurring infection, you may be advised to take low doses of an antibiotic daily for many months or to take a single dose of an antibiotic after sexual intercourse to prevent infection.

For More Information

www.urologyhealth.org/urology/index.cfm?article=47
Information on urinary tract infections in adults from the American Urological Association.

Answers to questions about painful urination, from the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Urinary tract infection fact sheet from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health.