

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT URINARY TRACT INFECTION

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## What Is a Urinary Tract Infection?

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is a common infection of the urethra (the tube that takes urine out of the body), bladder, or kidney. Bacteria can get into the urethra and travel to the bladder, causing an infection. The infection can also travel to the kidneys. You may have higher risk for UTIs if you:

- Men can also get UTIs, but they are more common in women.
- Are sexually active.
- Are pregnant.
- Use certain types of birth control, such as a spermicide.
- Have a blocked flow of urine, for example from a kidney stone.
- Use a urinary catheter.
- Have diabetes.
- Have bladder or spinal cord injuries.
- Have an enlarged prostate.
- Have had a previous UTI.

## What Are the Warning Signs?

- Pain or burning when urinating
- Urgent or frequent need to urinate
- Blood in the urine
- Pain in the lower back or pelvic area
- Fever

## How Is It Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms. In some cases, you may need to give a urine sample, which will help your doctor confirm UTI and decide which treatment is best.

## How Is It Treated?

- Medicines called antibiotics are used to treat UTIs.
- Some people get frequent UTIs. Talk with your doctor about treatment options if this is the case.

## How Can It Be Prevented?

If you have frequent UTIs, your doctor may suggest patient-initiated therapy when you have typical symptoms or may prescribe an antibiotic to take after sex, although it is unclear whether



this is a good option because resistance to antibiotics is increasing.

## Questions for My Doctor

- How can I prevent future UTIs?
- When will my symptoms go away?
- Do I need medicine? How should I take it?
- If I don't take antibiotics, will the infection go away on its own?
- What should I do if I don't feel better after taking the antibiotics?
- Does drinking cranberry juice help?
- Do over-the-counter medicines treat the infection?
- Should I stop having sex when I have a UTI?

## For More Information



### MedlinePlus

<https://medlineplus.gov/urinarytractinfections.html>

### National Institutes of Health

[www.nidck.nih.gov/health-information/urolologic-diseases/bladder-infection-uti-in-adults](http://www.nidck.nih.gov/health-information/urolologic-diseases/bladder-infection-uti-in-adults)