



Fact Sheet

2006

Student Health Services Texas A&M University

Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections are a serious health problem affecting millions of people each year. Infections of the urinary tract are the second most common type of infection in the body. One in five women will develop a urinary tract infection (UTI) during her lifetime (National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse).

What is a UTI?

A urinary tract infection occurs when bacteria from the digestive tract cling to the opening of the urethra and multiply.

Who can get a UTI?

Anyone can develop a UTI, but some people are more likely than others. Most UTIs occur in people with catheters, diabetics, infants with abnormal urinary tracts, and women.

Why do women get more UTIs than men?

A woman's urethra is short, giving bacteria quick access to the bladder. A woman's urethral opening is close to sources of bacteria. Other factors that may increase a woman's risk for developing a UTI include:

- ◆ Frequent sexual intercourse
- ◆ Diaphragm use
- ◆ Using condoms with spermicidal foam

Symptoms of a UTI

- ◆ Frequent urge to urinate
- ◆ Burning during urination
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Feeling pressure above pubic bone
- ◆ Only able to pass a small amount of urine
- ◆ Fever may indicate that infection has spread to the kidneys

SEE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS!

How to prevent UTIs

- ◆ Drink plenty of water
- ◆ Urinate when you feel the need
- ◆ Wipe from front to back to prevent bacteria from the anus from spreading
- ◆ Take showers instead of baths
- ◆ Wash the genital area (of both partners) before sexual intercourse
- ◆ Urinate after intercourse

- ◆ Avoid feminine hygiene products
- ◆ Decrease use of alcohol and caffeine
- ◆ Some doctors also recommend drinking cranberry juice, which can inhibit the growth of bacteria by acidifying the urine

For more information, please call the Women's Health Center at 458-8387 or visit the [National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse](#).