

UNDERSTANDING UTI'S

WHAT IS A URINARY TRACT INFECTION (UTI)?

A UTI is an infection that develops in any part of the urinary tract. Bladder infections are the most common type of UTI and may trigger painful urination, pelvic pain, cloudy or bloody urine.

HOW DO UTI'S DEVELOP?

UTIs are generally caused by microbes, such as bacteria, that overcome the body's natural defenses and get into the urinary tract. The urinary tract is separated into the upper urinary tract, which includes the kidneys and ureters; and the lower urinary tract, which includes the urethra and bladder. The majority of UTIs occur in the lower urinary tract; infections of the upper urinary tract are oftentimes more severe.

TREATMENT

It is possible for the body to resolve minor UTIs on its own, but oftentimes, UTIs caused by bacteria must be treated with antibiotics. Make a hospital visit to receive medical treatment. The doctor will first determine the cause of the UTI by doing a physical exam, asking about symptoms, and ordering urine tests, if needed. Then, the patient will be prescribed antibiotics based on the type of bacteria that triggered the infection. Depending on the individual's history with UTIs, urinary tract health, and the severity of the infection, length of treatment may vary.

SYMPTOMS

- Frequent urination
- Bloody or cloudy urine
- Urine with a strong odor
- Pressure in the lower abdomen
- Pelvic pain
- Pain while urinating

WHO IS MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP A UTI?

Women are more likely to develop UTIs because their urethras are shorter than men's. Because of this, it is easier for bacteria to reach their bladders.

Other factors include:

- Sexual activity
- Pregnancy
- Mature Age
- Diabetes
- Previous history of UTIs
- Urinary tract abnormalities
- Weakened immune system
- Catheter use

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

When infections in the lower urinary tract are left untreated, bacteria may travel all the way to the kidneys and cause kidney infections. This could permanently damage one or both kidneys, lower your kidney function and leave kidney scars. When the kidneys are less capable of removing waste and excess fluids from your blood, fluid build-up in blood vessels can cause high blood pressure.

In a small number of cases, UTIs may also lead to sepsis, a potentially life-threatening complication. Sepsis occurs when an infection causes the body to release chemicals into the bloodstream that throw it off-balance. This may cause tissue damage, multiple organ failure and even lead to death. If your patient is suffering from sepsis, get medical care immediately.

SYMPTOMS OF SEPSIS

If your patient is experiencing symptoms of sepsis, go to the hospital right away.

- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in lower back
- Confusion
- Rapid heart rate
- Low body temperature
- High body temperature
- Nausea
- Vomiting