

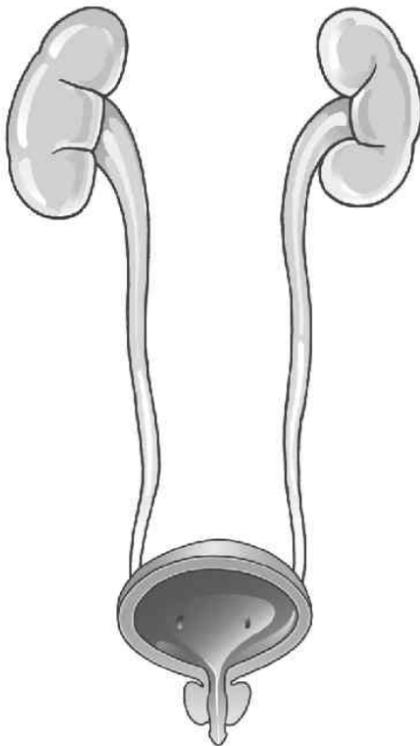
Know the Facts about UTI

One out of two healthy women suffer from urinary tract infection (UTI).

Q1. What are the causes of urinary tract infections?

Most UTIs arise from one type of bacteria, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*).

Any part of the urinary tract may get infected. The urinary tract includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra.



Kidneys produce urine.

Ureters carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

Bladder stores urine.

Urethra carries urine from the bladder to outside.

Q2. How common are urinary tract infections and what are the risk factors?

- Infections of the urinary tract are the second most common type of infection in the body.
- Women are especially prone to UTIs. UTIs in men can occur either due to obstruction caused by urinary stones or enlargement of prostate gland which is situated below bladder, it can also occur due to infection of prostate gland.
- UTIs may occur in infants, both boys and girls, who are born with abnormalities of the urinary

tract, which sometimes need to be corrected with surgery.

- People with diabetes have a higher risk of a UTI because of changes in the immune system.

Q3. Why do women have urinary tract infections more often than men?

- Women have a short urethra and the urethral opening is near the anus and vagina which allows the bacteria to enter the bladder easily.
- Wiping from the back to the front after a bowel movement can bring bacteria from the anus to the urethra.
- For many women, sexual intercourse seems to trigger an infection.
- Pregnant women seem no more prone to UTIs than other women. However, when a UTI does occur in a pregnant woman, it is more likely to travel to the kidneys.

Q4. What are the symptoms of urinary tract infections?

Not everyone with a UTI has symptoms, but most people get at least some symptoms. These may include:

- A frequent urge to urinate
- Painful, burning feeling in the area of the bladder or urethra during urination.
- The urine itself may look milky or cloudy, even reddish if blood is present.
- Normally, a UTI does not cause fever if it is in the bladder or urethra. A fever may mean that the infection has reached the kidneys.
- Other symptoms of a kidney infection include pain in the back or side below the ribs, nausea, or vomiting.
- Many a times children are likely to have fever and no other symptoms. UTI should be considered when a child or infant seems irritable, is not eating normally or has an unexplained fever that does not go away. These symptoms are suggestive of UTI in children.

Q5. How is urinary tract infection diagnosed?

To find out whether you have a UTI, your doctor will test a sample of urine for pus and bacteria. Then the bacteria are grown in a culture and tested against different antibiotics to see which drug best destroys the bacteria. This last step is called a sensitivity test.

When an infection does not clear up with treatment or if you get recurrent infections, the doctor may order some additional tests like X-ray and ultrasonography to determine if the urinary system is normal.

Q6. How are urinary tract infections treated?

UTIs are treated with antibacterial drugs. The choice of drug and length of treatment depend on the patient's history and the urine tests. The sensitivity test is especially useful in helping the doctor select the most effective drug.

Usually, symptoms of the infection go away a day or two after you start taking the treatment.

Kidney infections generally require several weeks of antibiotic treatment.

Drinking plenty of water helps cleanse the urinary tract of bacteria.

A pregnant woman who develops a UTI should be treated promptly to avoid premature delivery of her baby and other risks such as high blood pressure. Some antibiotics are not safe to take during

pregnancy and the doctor will decide the right treatment.

Q7. What is the risk of having another episode of UTI?

Many women suffer from recurrent episodes of UTIs. About 20-40% of women will have recurrent infection.

Q8. How can you prevent recurrent urinary tract infections?

A woman who has frequent recurrences (three or more a year) should ask her doctor about one of the following treatment options:

- Take low doses of an antibiotic for 6 months or longer. If taken at bedtime, the drug remains in the bladder longer and may be more effective.
- Take a single dose of an antibiotic after sexual intercourse.
- Take a short course of antibiotics when symptoms appear.

Tips on preventing UTI:



- Drink plenty of water every day.
- Urinate when you feel the need; don't resist the urge to urinate.
- Wipe from front to back to prevent bacteria around the anus from entering the vagina or urethra.
- Urinate after sexual intercourse.
- Cleanse the genital area before sexual intercourse.