

GENESIS OB/GYN, INC.

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

A urinary tract infection (UTI) can occur anywhere in the urinary tract (the kidney, bladder and/or urethra). Occasionally bacteria get into the urinary tract and cause infection. The most common types of UTI are:

1. Cystitis (infection of the bladder);
2. Urethritis (usually caused by infection of the urethra);
3. Pyelonephritis (kidney infection).

CAUSE:

Bladder and kidney infections are usually caused by bacteria that are normally found in the rectum. Urethritis, on the other hand, may be caused by sexually transmitted infections.

Women are more likely than men to have UTIs because the vagina is located close to the urethra. Bacteria spread from the vagina or rectum only have to travel an inch or two to reach a woman's bladder.

Sexual intercourse may be a common cause of urethritis and bladder infections. Bacteria in the vagina or on the genitals can enter the urinary tract during intercourse. Another cause is wiping the wrong way after urinating or having a bowel movement - always wipe from **front to back**; that is, away from the vagina toward the rectum.

SYMPTOMS:

Frequent urination;
Painful urination;
Bloody or cloudy urine;
Desire to urinate but unable to do so;
Painful intercourse;
General malaise (not feeling well) often with fever; and
Back pain.

TREATMENT:

A number of very effective antibiotics are available to treat UTIs. The most important thing to do is to completely take all of the medication that has been prescribed for you even when you are feeling better. If you don't complete your medication, the infection may come back.

PREVENTION:

Always wipe from front to back
Wear cotton underwear;
Don't wear tight pants or pantyhose under slacks;
Don't use bubble bath, bath oil or feminine hygiene sprays;
Urinate regularly - do not suppress the urge;
Urinate before and after sexual intercourse;
Use a lubricating jelly if intercourse is dry and painful;
Drink 6-8 glasses of water every day; and
Take 500 mg Vitamin C per day.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

If you have been diagnosed with a UTI remember to:

Drink cranberry juice and 8-10 glasses of water per day;
Avoid intercourse until the infection is gone;
Completely take prescribed medications; and
Avoid caffeinated products (caffeine is an irritant to the bladder).

A NOTE ON PREGNANCY:

Pregnant women in particular may be more likely to get urinary tract infections because of pregnancy changes in size and shape of the urinary tract. A UTI during pregnancy is always of concern because it can progress to pyelonephritis or cause premature labor.

A NOTE ON MENOPAUSE:

After menopause, women may also be more likely to get UTIs, possibly due to reduced levels of the hormone estrogen in this age group. The decrease in estrogen makes skin and tissues more delicate and this, in turn, may make the urinary tract easier for bacteria to infect.

If your infection is recurrent greater than 3 times per year, you need a workup by a Urologist. Please call us for a referral.