



Identifying and Preventing Urinary Tract Infections (UTI)

Urinary tract infections (UTI) are common infections in the urinary system. As individuals age, the risk of UTIs can also increase. Knowing both common UTI signs and symptoms and those specific to individuals in your care is important in catching and treating UTIs early. This is especially important as a UTI can lead to complications, such as sepsis, when left untreated.

What is a UTI?

A UTI is an infection in any part of the urinary track including kidneys, ureters, bladder or urethra. Individuals can experience common symptoms, but as people age, symptoms may vary, and it may be harder to identify a UTI. Knowing the signs and symptoms can help you identify UTIs early and seek medical treatment.

UTIs are a health problem for females and males. Half of those with an Unplanned Medical Hospitalization (Internal Infection) SIR who had a UTI were male.

Current Statistics

- UTIs are a **common internal infection** that can lead to additional and more severe infections.
- **1 in 3** of Unplanned Medical Hospitalization SIRs related to Internal Infections involve UTIs.
- **22%** of these SIRs with UTI also develop sepsis.
- Among those with a UTI SIR in FY 19/20:
 - **~80%** were 52 years of age or older;
 - **Roughly half** were male, and **half** were female; and
 - **41%** live in a CCF, **34%** live in an ICF, and **16%** receive SLS.

Common Symptoms of a UTI

- A strong, persistent urge to urinate;
- A burning sensation when urinating;
- Passing frequent, small amounts of urine;
- Urine that appears cloudy;
- Urine that appears red, bright pink or cola-colored (a sign of blood in the urine);
- Strong-smelling urine;
- Feeling tired, shaky, and weak;
- Lower abdominal pain/discomfort; and
- Pelvic pain, in women.



When symptoms are identified early and evaluated by a primary care provider, the risk of secondary infections decreases.

Additional Symptoms of a UTI in Elderly

- Confusion or delirium;
- Fever;
- Painful urination;
- Nausea/vomiting;
- Sudden changes in behavior or agitation; and
- Poor motor skills or lethargy.



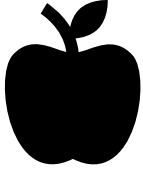
Preventing and Treating UTIs

Urinate as soon as possible when the need arises.



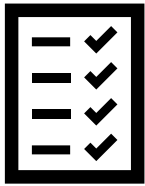
Hygiene and Cleaning

- Practice good hand washing techniques.
- After urination, always wipe front to back.
- Check incontinence briefs/pads every 2 hours.
- Encourage wearing cotton underwear and loose-fitting clothes.



Hydration and Nutrition

- Encourage individuals to stay hydrated (i.e. 6-8 8oz glasses of water daily).
- Offer fluids frequently and keep drinks readily available.
- Ensure regular bowel movements and encourage diets with healthy fiber intake.
- Avoid caffeine, soda drinks, coffee and alcohol if individual is easily dehydrated.
- Cranberry supplementation may be added to the diet (discuss with healthcare provider).



Managing Chronic Conditions

- Manage treatment for chronic conditions, like diabetes or kidney disease.
- Document changes in the individual's mental and physical health and alert their primary care physician if the health changes become marked or persist.
- Monitor UTI frequency and specific symptoms for that individual.



Treat Until Complete

- Get medical care immediately either in-person or through telehealth services.
- Most infections are treated with an antibiotic. Ensure individuals complete their full antibiotic course and follow doctor directions.

Preventing Catheter-Associated UTI

- Ensure properly trained persons insert indwelling urinary catheters only when necessary and indicated per physician's order;
- Always use hand hygiene immediately before and after insertion or when there is any manipulation of the catheter device or site;
- Use aseptic technique and sterile equipment for insertion;
- A closed catheter drainage system, with ports in the distal catheter for needle aspiration of urine, should be used; and
- Remove indwelling urinary catheter as soon as it is no longer required.

Additional Resources

Bladder Infections:

[Bladder Infection \(Urinary Tract Infection—UTI\) in Adults | NIDDK \(nih.gov\)](#)

The Urinary Tract:

[The Urinary Tract & How It Works | NIDDK \(nih.gov\)](#)

Bladder Health:

[13 Tips to Keep Your Bladder Healthy | National Institute on Aging \(nih.gov\)](#)

Bladder Health for Older Adults:

[Bladder Health for Older Adults | National Institute on Aging \(nih.gov\)](#)

