

Preventing Urinary Tract Infections: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical • Renal & Genitourinary

A urinary tract infection, or UTI, is caused by germs in your bladder or kidneys. Finishing your treatment and a few daily habits help keep it from coming back.

Know the signs

- Burning or pain when you urinate (pee).
- A sudden, strong need to urinate, or going very often.
- Cloudy, bloody, or bad-smelling urine.
- In older adults: new confusion, falls, or leaking urine.

Finish your medicine

- Take every dose of your antibiotic, even when you feel better.
- Never save pills or use someone else's antibiotic.
- Bladder pain pills, such as phenazopyridine (AZO), ease burning but do not cure the infection. They turn urine orange. Use them 2 days at most.

Drink and empty your bladder

- Drink enough water to keep your urine pale yellow, unless you have a fluid limit.
- Urinate when you feel the urge. Do not hold it.
- Empty your bladder all the way. Urinate soon after sex.

Keep clean

- Wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
- Skip douches and scented products in the genital area.

- Wear cotton underwear. Change wet pads soon.

Help your bladder heal

- While you have symptoms, avoid coffee, tea, soda, alcohol, and spicy food.
- Cranberry juice does not treat a UTI. Ask your provider before using cranberry to prevent one.

Call your provider today if you have

- Burning, urgency, or cloudy urine
- Blood in your urine
- No improvement after 2 to 3 days of antibiotics
- **Fever, chills, back or side pain, or vomiting: call right away.** If you cannot reach your provider, go to urgent care.

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- New confusion or trouble waking up, with fever or chills
- Very fast breathing or a racing heartbeat with fever
- Fainting, or cold, clammy, or blotchy skin

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/urinary-tract-infection-prevention/patient

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