



A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection that develops in any part of the urinary tract including the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Urine travels from the kidneys to the bladder via two ureters. The bladder holds the urine until it is emptied through the urethra. UTI's usually develop in the bladder and urethra when bacteria enter the tract via the urethra. Women are more prone to UTI's as the urethra is short and the vagina and rectum are close to the opening of the urethra. Treatment usually involves an antibiotic and a medication to relieve symptoms.

How do I know if I have a UTI?

- **Burning with urination.**
- **Need to urinate frequently or feeling of urgency, feeling a need to urinate and then just urinating a small amount.**
- **Blood in the urine.**
- **Cloudy or smelly urine.**
- **Symptoms of a more serious infection including high fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, back and abdominal pain require more immediate care. Vaginal discharge and painful sex may be signs of another type of infection.**

Home Care and Prevention

- ⇒ Drink 6-8 glasses of water or juice a day. Cranberry juice may help prevent UTI's.
- ⇒ Empty your bladder before and no more than 2 hours after sex.
- ⇒ Wipe front to back after going to the bathroom.
- ⇒ Avoid tight clothing and wear cotton underwear which allow air to pass in and out and prevents bacteria growth.
- ⇒ Avoid cigarette smoke and caffeine both are bladder irritants.
- ⇒ Avoid use of douches, feminine hygiene sprays, bath oils and bubble baths.
- ⇒ Start the antibiotic as soon as it is prescribed and take exactly as prescribed.

Follow up at Health Services for further evaluation, treatment and instructions. If a more serious infection is a concern seek care sooner.