



## UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

SAINT LIAM HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

574-631-7497

HTTP://UHS.ND.EDU

### URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS IN WOMEN

Urinary tract infections (UTI's) are common. Women are especially prone to UTI's. One woman in five develops a UTI during her lifetime.

#### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Frequent urge to urinate even when the bladder seems empty
- A painful and / or burning sensation with urination.
- Blood in the urine (sometimes).

#### CAUSES

- **Most commonly** *E. coli*, a bacteria that normally lives in the colon.
- Women are more susceptible because the urethra, the tube from the bladder to the outside, is shorter in women, and bacteria can easily travel from the skin or the vagina or rectum to the bladder.

#### TREATMENT

- **A urine sample is necessary** to detect the presence of bacteria, and to determine the best treatment. If bacteria is found when your urine is examined, a urine *culture & sensitivity* test may be performed. This test determines the exact cause of the infection and the specific medication that treats it. Results will be available in about 48 hours.
- **Medication(s):** You will be given medication to treat your infection. If an antibiotic is prescribed, **take all of it**. An additional medication may be prescribed if you have pain with urination.
- **Drink plenty of fluids**, about one glass every hour.
- **Cranberry juice** may help to make the urine and bladder less hospitable to bacteria.
- **Avoid alcohol, caffeine products and spicy foods** which can irritate the urinary tract.

#### RETURN TO SEE THE DOCTOR IF:

- **Increased pain develops, especially in your back.**
- **Fever rises to 101°F. (38.3 C) or higher.**
- **Vomiting begins.**
- **You do not feel better after 48 hours.**

#### PREVENTION

- Drink plenty of water, 8-10 glasses per day.
- Urinate when you feel the need; don't resist the urge to urinate.
- Women should wipe themselves from front to back after using the toilet.
- Take Showers instead of tub baths.
- Do not use bubble baths, feminine hygiene sprays and scented douches, which may irritate the urethra.
- Avoid tight pants. Wear cotton underwear so perspiration can be absorbed.
- Do not smoke. Smoking is the major cause of bladder cancer.
- If sexually active, urinate after intercourse.

Adapted from **The National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information**

Revised: August 2011



## Urinary Tract Infections in Women

