



**Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) are common in females due to the female anatomy. Early treatment of the infection is necessary to avoid more serious complications like a kidney infection (pyelonephritis) or urosepsis.**

**UTIs can produce many signs and symptoms, some of which are common, like:**

- A strong, persistent urge to urinate with only a small amount each time
- A burning sensation when urinating
- Cloudy urine
- Blood tinged urine (red, bright pink or cola-colored)
- Strong smelling urine
- Pelvic pain that typically is at/near the center of the pelvis area around the pubic bone

**Common signs and symptoms of an Upper UTI or Kidney infection are:**

- More severe and systemic presentation than a UTI
- Suprapubic pain
- Flank pain
- Fever
- Chills
- Elevated white blood count
- Nausea/Vomiting

**I think I have a UTI, what now?** Call our office, 208-338-8900 to be seen. We will ask you to come in and see a provider. We will get you in during the same day (during our open hours). If after hours or on a weekend/holiday, seeking care from an urgent care may be appropriate. During your visit, the provider will examine you and your symptoms, as may symptoms of UTIs can be similar to other gynecological conditions like bacterial vaginosis (vaginal infection), gonorrhea/chlamydia, etc. Additionally, if you are having frequent, recurrent UTIs other treatment options may need to be discussed. Please be prepared to provide a urine sample for which we will do an in-house urinalysis (commonly referred to a "10-dip"). Depending on your signs/symptoms as well as the provider's assessment, you may be started on antibiotics and/or have your urine sent to the laboratory for culture.

**Why a urine culture is needed:** The urine culture helps determine the specific type of bacteria in your urine. The most common bacteria is from e-coli which is caused by the close proximity of the female genitalia to the anus (cross contamination during bowel movements). However, there are many different bacteria that can cause a UTI. Bacteria identification is essential for ensuring appropriate treatment.

If the urine culture returns as "positive" the lab will run a "sensitivity" test. This tests the bacteria with different antibiotics to determine which antibiotics will effectively treat the infection. Different strains of bacteria can be resistant to typical antibiotics. If your particular bacteria is resistant to an antibiotic that you may have been prescribed, the likelihood of your UTI being cured is low and you are at an increased risk of developing complications.



**Treatment and tips:** Please make sure you take the entire antibiotic course as directed. This means taking the medication throughout the specific number of days for which your provider ordered, regardless if your signs/symptoms have resolved. This is very important. The last few bacteria remaining are the strongest. If your course is not fully complete there is a possibility of recurrence. Also, make sure you are drinking more water. This helps to dilute your urine and helps get the bacteria flushed from your system.

A few tips that can help prevent UTIs:

- After urinating or having a bowel movement remember to wipe from front to back. This can help in preventing cross contamination of fecal bacteria (stool)
- Urinate after intercourse to help flush bacteria that may be present.
- Avoid feminine products that may irritate the urethra (deodorant sprays, douches, powders).
- If you are prone to UTIs, take a shower instead of a bath as bathing can introduce bacteria into your vagina/urethra.
- Wear breathable underwear (cotton).
- When you have to urinate, go soon. Due to the anatomy of the female genitals, more frequent urination can help in flushing bacteria and prevent UTIs.

**Remember that UTIs are common and treatable, but early treatment is essential. Avoiding or delaying treatment can put you at risk and, if you are pregnant, your baby at risk.**

**For more information about UTIs, please visit the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) at:**

<https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Urinary-Tract-Infections-UTIs>