

CYSTITIS (UTIS)

By Janette Williams
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Cystitis (Urinary Tract Infection - 'UTIs') is one of the most common bacterial infections. It can be very painful, uncomfortable and you feel unwell. It can also cause some incontinence.

CAUSE	REASON	MANAGEMENT
Dehydration	Lack of fluid makes urine concentrated and passed less frequently giving bacteria time to multiply and adhere to the bladder wall.	Increase fluids up to 2000mls per day (unless not recommended by LMO*.)
Poor personal hygiene	Wiping from back passage to front passage brings E. coli from bowel and leaves around urethra allowing it access to urethra. Not being able to clean self properly after having bowels open leaving faecal matter (E. coli) on perineum close to urethra. In post-menopausal women, the loss of oestrogen reduces the ability of the vagina to control bacteria which can cause UTIs. The urethra becomes shorter and flatter, making it easy for bacteria to access the bladder.	Ensure wipe from front to back to remove bacteria from urethra. Use devices to assist with cleaning perineum. Ladies, if you are post-menopausal talk to your local doctor about some topical oestrogen therapy to help restore the ability of the vagina to control the bacteria to reduce the risk of UTIs. Avoid talcum powder; wear cotton underwear.
Faecal incontinence	Faecal matter around perineum leaves E. coli around the urethra (faecal incontinence in men is a major cause of UTIs in men).	If faecal incontinence, remove faecal matter as quickly as possible to reduce risk of UTI.
Tampons	The string of the tampon sits close to the urethra and can harbour bacteria which can enter the urethra.	If history of UTIs, stop using tampons and use pads. Change any type of pad regularly.
Sex	The thrust of the penis in the vagina can push bacteria in the urethra into the bladder.	If history of UTIs following sex, empty bladder before and after sex, wash perineum before and after sex. Liaise with LMO for course of long term preventative medication (e.g. Trimethoprim, Macrochantin)
Catheters	The presence of a catheter in the bladder gives a tract for bacteria to enter the bladder.	There will always be a low grade infection with any catheter so only treat a symptomatic infection (cloudy smelly urine, feeling unwell, pain in bladder.) If symptomatic, have catheter changed and take urine specimen via clean catheter.
Hovering	Ladies, do you hover over the toilet and not sit? If so your pelvic floor muscles are not relaxed and the bladder contraction is not strong enough to completely empty the bladder, increasing the risk of a UTI.	Ladies, please sit on the toilet seat, relax the pelvic floor muscles to completely empty your bladder.
Diabetes	As a diabetic you produce sweeter urine and also lose bladder contractility causing incomplete emptying of up to 3-400mls of urine allowing the bacteria to thrive in the warm sweet medium. Sometimes there is bacteria in your urine but you have no symptoms. In this case, treatment of antibiotics is not recommended.	Have the post void volume checked, if above 300mls learn how to self-catheterise once or twice a day to empty the bladder every day and reduce the risk of UTIs.
Stones and tumours	Bacteria will adhere to a stone or tumour so antibiotics cannot destroy the bacteria.	If repeat infections, talk to your local doctor to refer for investigations and appropriate treatment.
High volume of urine left after voiding	It is common for people over 70 to retain 100mls+ in the bladder after voiding.	Encourage fluids to continually flush the bladder and not leave static urine in the bladder.

*LMO - Local Medical Officer

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General Information

- A specimen of urine (MSU) must be taken to identify bacteria and sensitivity for prescription of appropriate antibiotic.
- Complete the course of antibiotics and ensure a repeat MSU is taken to ensure infection has been cleared.
- For 50% of people over 70 years of age the first course of antibiotics does not eradicate the infection.
- For anyone at risk from UTIs taking cranberry tablets (3-4) or juice (500mls) daily may assist in prevention.
- If at any time you think you have a UTI please visit your doctor for treatment of the infection.
It is not recommended to ignore a UTI if you are feeling unwell.

References

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