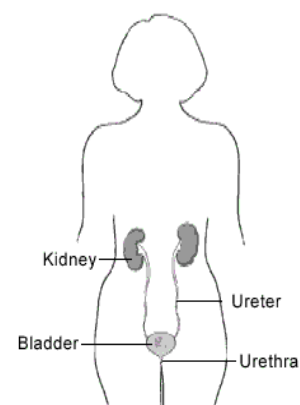


Urinary Tract Infections (UTI's)

A urinary tract infection is the path that urine takes as it leaves the body. The urinary system is composed of the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Any part of your urinary system can become infected, but most infections involve the lower urinary tract – the urethra and the bladder.

- **The Kidneys** - form urine as they filter waste material from the blood.
- **The Ureters** - tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder
- **The Bladder** - basically a “water balloon” that holds the urine the kidneys make.
- **The Urethra** - tube that carries the bladder to outside the body.



A urinary tract infection happens when bacteria enter the tract at any point; the urethra and the bladder are the sites of most infections. Women are at greater risk of developing a urinary tract infection than are men. A urinary tract infection limited to your bladder can be painful and annoying; however, serious consequences can occur if a urinary tract infection spreads to the kidneys.

Not everyone with a urinary tract infection develops recognizable signs and symptoms, but most people have some.

In general, urinary tract infection signs and symptoms develop rapidly and can include:

- A strong, persistent urge to urinate
- A burning sensation when urinating
- Passing frequent, small amounts of urine
- Blood in the urine (hematuria) or cloudy, strong-smelling urine

However, each type of urinary tract infection may result in more-specific signs and symptoms, depending on which part of your urinary tract is infected.

Part of Urinary Tract Infected	Signs and Symptoms
Kidneys - (Acute Pyelonephritis)	Upper back pain and side pain; High fever, Chills, and Shaking
Bladder - (Cystitis)	Lower abdominal pain or pressure; Pelvic pressure; Frequent and painful urination, Low-grade fever
Urethra - (Urethritis)	Burning with urination

If you develop any of these symptoms, contact a healthcare provider promptly, worsening symptoms can develop quickly.

Some people appear to be more likely than are others to develop urinary tract infections. Risk factors include:

- Being Female: Half of all women will develop a urinary tract infection at some time, and many experience repeated infections. One key reason is the female anatomy; women have a shorter urethra, so the bacteria only have a short distance to travel.
- Being Sexually Active: Sexual activity can irritate the urethra, which allows bacteria to travel more quickly to the bladder.
- Using certain types of birth control: Women who use diaphragms and spermicides for birth control are at higher risk.
- History of kidneys stones or other urinary obstruction.

To avoid a UTI, try these:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid excessive alcohol, caffeine and spicy foods. These can irritate the urinary tract in some people
- Do not wait to urinate for long periods of time. Urinate when you feel the urge.
- Wash the genital area daily with a mild soap and rinse well.
- Do not use douches, perfumed soaps or sprays, or deodorant pads or tampons.
- Urinate before and after intercourse.

Web Links for more information:

- WebMD: <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/urinary-tract-infections-in-teens-and-adults-topic-overview>
- Family Doctor.org: <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/women/gen-health/190.html>

If you are a registered Millersville University student and you have questions or you need to make an appointment, please call Millersville University Health Services at 872-3250.



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