

What might your pharmacist/nurse/doctor do?

- If your symptoms are likely to get better on their own, you may receive self-care advice and pain relief.
- Ask you to drink more fluids.
- Ask for a urine sample if you have 2 or more signs and symptoms. You may be given an antibiotic with self-care advice.

Always trust your pharmacist's/nurse's/doctors' advice about antibiotics

- Antibiotics can be life saving for serious urine infections.
 - Remember to always complete the course.
 - But antibiotics are not always needed for urinary symptoms
 - Common side effects of taking antibiotics include thrush, rashes, vomiting and diarrhoea.
 - Antibiotics affect the bacteria in your bowel, which may make them resistant to antibiotics for at least a year.
- Keep antibiotics working, only take them when your doctor, nurse advises them.

Who to contact

Contact your GP practice within working hours or contact 111 out of hours for advice.

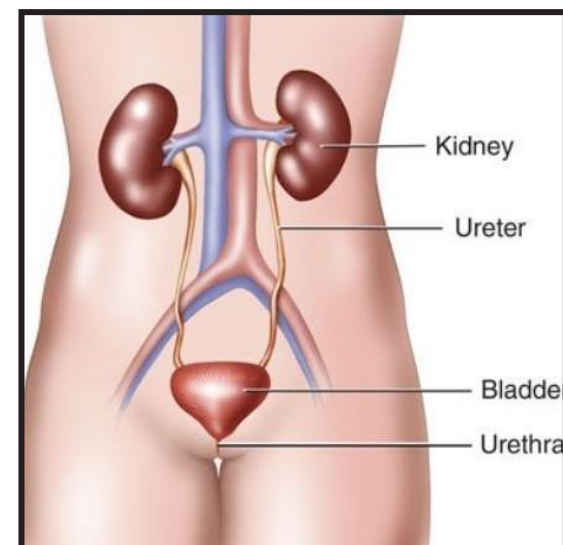
Trust your instincts, ask for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are.

*Please note urine pots for outpatient appointments will not be supplied by GP practices. Urine pots will be supplied by the hospital on arrival at your outpatient appointment.

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Urinary Tract Infections (UTI)

Information leaflet



What is a urinary tract infection (UTI)?

A UTI is an infection in any part of your urinary system — your kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. Most infections involve the lower urinary tract — the bladder and the urethra.

A urine infection occurs when bacteria in any part of the urine system cause symptoms. Two or more new symptoms may be suggestive of a UTI.

- Pain or burning when passing urine
- High or low temperature
- Urgency (feeling the need to urinate immediately)
- Pain in your lower tummy above pubic area
- Incontinence (wetting yourself more often than usual)
- Passing urine more often than usual
- Cloudy urine, or visible blood in your urine
- Confusion, change in behaviour, or unsteadiness on feet

How do you test for a UTI?

If you are under the age of 65 you will be asked for a urine sample so this can be tested with a urine dipstick. If this dipstick is positive to blood, protein, nitrates, and leucocytes a urine sample will be sent to be tested to see if the bacteria in the urine are sensitive to antibiotics, this may take 24-48 hours for a result.

Please ask for the **mid-stream urine sample (MSU) leaflet** if you are asked to produce a urine sample.

If you are over 65 a routine dipstick is not required, this is because the results of these tests become less reliable with increasing age. Up to half of older adults will have bacteria present in their urine which will test positive on a urine dipstick test but does not mean you have an infection. Antibiotics are not beneficial and may cause harm in these circumstances.

What if it is not a UTI?

Other possible causes of your symptoms may be:

- Dehydration
- Side effects of medicine
- A different infection
- Poor diet
- Constipation
- Vaginal atrophy (If you have a dry and sore vagina ask your Health Care Professional about this condition).

What you can do to alleviate the symptoms

- Drink enough fluid so that you pass urine regularly during the day, especially during hot weather.
- Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty.
- Take paracetamol regularly, up to four times daily to relieve fever and pain.

If you're worried about wetting yourself, see your Health Care Professional for advice.

What you can do to help prevent a urine infection

- Drink 1600 – 2000mls per day.
- Avoid drinking too many fizzy drinks or alcohol.
- Prevent constipation. Ask for advice if needed.
- Maintain good control of diabetes.
- Stop bacteria spreading from your bowel into your bladder (wipe front to back after using the toilet, change pads immediately if soiled).
- Wash with water before and after sex.