

Advice for Women with Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections.

Why do I get Urine Infections?

- Urine infections are usually caused by bacteria that occur naturally in the bowel
- In women the urethra (water pipe) is short so bacteria can easily find their way into the bladder and cause infection
- Bacteria can find it easier to get into the bladder when you are having sexual intercourse
- Constipation leads to an increased build-up of bacteria in your body which may lead to a greater risk of urinary tract infections.

What should I do if I get a urine infection?

If you feel a urine infection coming on:

- Drink plenty of fluids, between 1.5ltr and 2ltrs daily. Caffeinated drinks are best avoided.
- If painful, take simple painkillers such as paracetamol.

Mild urinary symptoms such as stinging and wanting to pass urine frequently usually get better on their own within a few days if you drink more water.

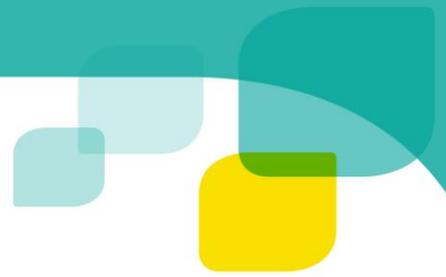
If there is no improvement, get a sample from the middle of your urine stream in a sterile container and take to your GP. **It is really important not to collect the first urine that you pass as this is always full of bacteria, dead cells and secretions which will lead to incorrect results in the laboratory. Collect your sample from the middle of your stream.** If there are signs of infection in this sample you may be prescribed a short course of antibiotics.

- Always see your GP if you get a high temperature.

How can I prevent myself getting urine infections?

NICE – (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) - no longer recommends lifestyle changes, cranberry juice or cranberry products, due to lack of scientific evidence, however some patients find the following helps to prevent their infections:

- Ensure when wiping yourself after passing urine, you always wipe from front to back.
- After a bowel movement, clean the area around the anus gently, wiping from front to back and never repeating with the same tissue. Soft, non-scented tissue paper is recommended.
- Shower instead of taking a bath and avoid using scented soaps.
- Avoid using feminine hygiene sprays and scented douches.
- Cotton underwear is recommended.
- Avoid long intervals between urination (more than four hours).
- Avoid constipation which leads to overgrowth of the bacteria which cause urine infections.
- Avoid using a vaginal diaphragm for birth control.
- Empty your bladder after sexual intercourse, as sex can often 'push' bacteria up the water-pipe.
- Some patients find that drinking a small amount of cranberry juice with no added sugar 2-3 times daily or using cranberry tablets can reduce the number of infections they get. (Discuss with your GP first if you are on Warfarin tablets).



Contact Details and Telephone Numbers

If you have any concerns or need further advice please contact the urology department at the Royal United Hospital, Bath.

During office hours **Monday to Friday 9am-5pm:-**

If you have been in hospital within the last 2 weeks please ring our main hospital switchboard on 01225 428331 and ask for the Urology Nurse Practitioner.

Alternatively, please ring the urology nurses based in the out-patients department:-

Via Urology Reception 01225 825990

Urology Nurse Specialists 01225 824034

Urology Out-Patient Nurses Office 01225 824819

Please note the nurses' numbers have an answerphone as they may be in clinic but all answerphones are checked regularly and messages responded to.

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.