



## Bladder Infections

### MU Patient Education Series

#### Definition:

Bladder infections are a type of a group of infections called urinary tract infections. These are infections that can occur anywhere in your urinary system. Bladder infections are infections in the bladder.

#### CAUSES:

Bladder infections arise when bacteria and other germs enter the urinary tract. This type of infection is more prevalent in women because of the female anatomy. A women's urethra is close to the anus and the urethral opening is close to the bladder. This allows more bacteria to enter. Also, women can contract bladder infections through sexual intercourse, when using certain types of birth control or by wearing tight clothes. These factors put women at a much higher risk for acquiring these infections.

#### WHO IS AT HIGH RISK FOR A BLADDER INFECTION?

There are certain factors that can make individuals more susceptible to acquiring bladder infections. Some of these factors include:

- Being female
- Diabetes
- Old age
- Kidney stones
- Using a catheter
- Menopause
- Being sexually active
- Enlarged prostate
- Pregnancy
- Having urinary tract abnormalities
- Having a suppressed immune system



### SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

Bladder infections can elicit many symptoms or none at all. Most infections include any number of the following symptoms:

- Cloudy, bloody, or cola-colored urine
- Pain or burning with urination
- Continual urge to urinate
- When you urinate, there is only a small amount
- Brightly-colored urine
- Strong-smelling urine
- Pelvic (women) or rectal (men) pain

### DIAGNOSIS/TESTS:

If you are experiencing any of the aforementioned symptoms, be sure to contact your physician! When you visit your physician, they will likely conduct a routine physical examination and then a variety of diagnostic tests. The diagnostic tests may include analyzing a urine sample, growing bacteria from your urine in a lab, or taking blood or imaging tests of your urinary system.

### TREATMENT/CARE:

The treatment of a bladder infection usually begins with antibiotics. These medications will help to rid the infection and prevent the spread of it to your kidneys. Be sure to finish your whole prescription! You may also be prescribed pain relieving medications. Some other treatment methods include:

- Drinking lots of fluids
- Avoiding sexual activity until your symptoms subside
- Taking single doses of antibiotics to prevent infection
- Drinking cranberry juice if you are not taking blood-thinning medications such as warfarin
- Wearing cotton underwear and loose clothing

### PREVENTION:

There are several measures you can take to avoid contracting a bladder infection. Some of these measures include:

- Constantly drink lots of fluids, especially water
- Wipe from front to back
- Use sanitary pads instead of tampons
- Showers instead of baths
- Urinate before and after sexual intercourse
- Wear cotton underwear



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- Try to avoid tight clothing
- Drink cranberry juice if you are not taking blood-thinning medications such as warfarin
- Limit your caffeine intake
- Try to wash before and after sexual intercourse
- Keep the genital area clean and dry
- Avoid using irritating feminine products such as douches and powders in the genital area!

#### CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF:

A bladder infection can be dangerous and very uncomfortable! It is important to catch the infection early so it does not spread. If you are experiencing a high fever, back pain, no improvement of symptoms, weakness, dizziness, fainting or vomiting along with your bladder infection, make sure to call your physician immediately.

#### **DISCLAIMER:**

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