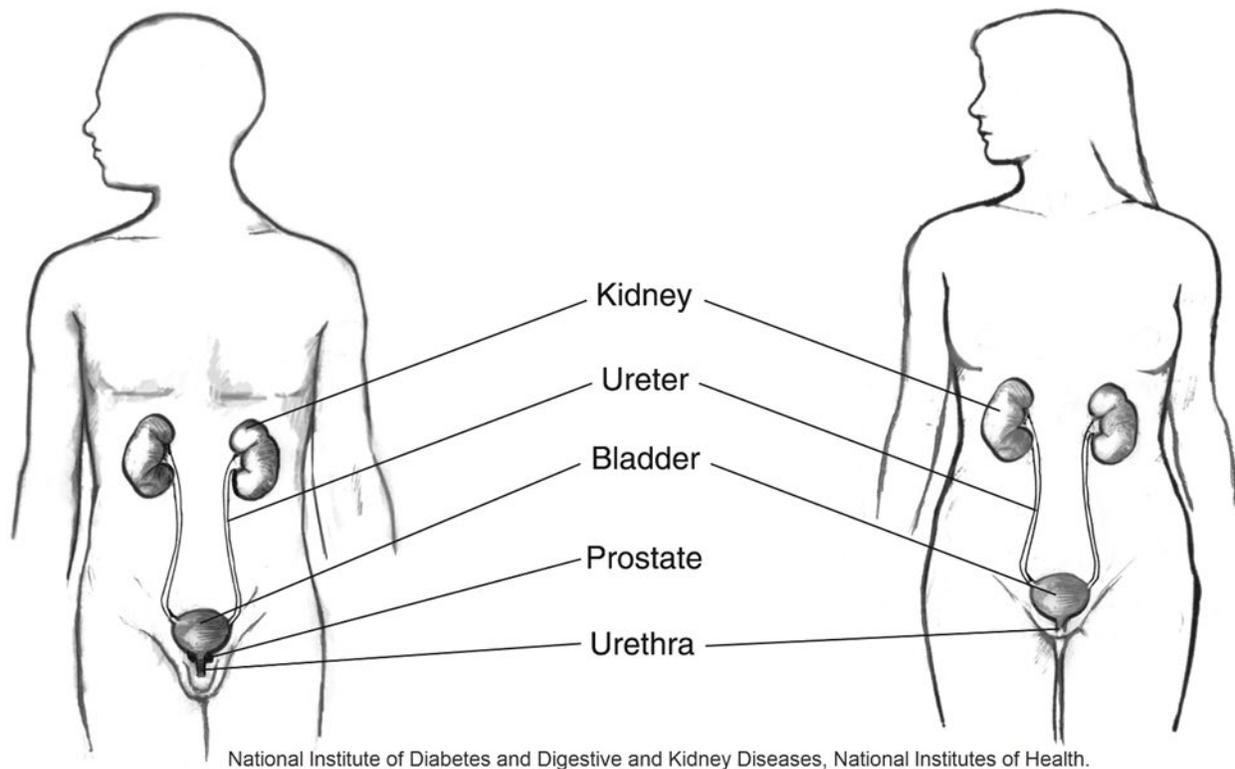


# How to Prevent a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

## What is a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)?

A Urinary Tract Infection happens when bacteria enter the urethra and travels up to the bladder or another part of the urinary system such as the kidneys.

**Below: the male and female urinary systems with kidneys, ureter, bladder, prostate and urethra labeled.**



## What are the symptoms of a bladder infection?

- Burning or pain when urinating
- Urinating more often than usual
- Feeling a strong urge or need to urinate but only get a few drops out
- Pain in your lower abdomen, pelvic area, or lower back
- Fever (sometimes)

## **What are the symptoms of a Kidney infection?**

- Fever (101 degrees Fahrenheit or greater) and upper back pain, located behind your ribcage usually on one side
- Nausea and vomiting

## **What causes UTIs?**

A large number of bacteria live on your skin and the areas around the vagina, penis, and rectum. The bacteria may get into the urine from the urethra and travel up to the bladder or even as far as the kidneys. This can occur by:

- Not keeping the genital area clean and dry.
- Contamination from stool after having a bowel movement.
- Being dehydrated
- Holding your urine (not going to the bathroom when you really need to)
- Not giving yourself time to completely empty your bladder while voiding.
- Not voiding after intercourse.

## **How do I prevent UTIs?**

There are steps you can take to prevent UTIs:

1. Keep your genital area clean and avoid sitting in wet or soiled undergarments for prolonged periods of time.
2. After urinating or having a bowel movement, cleanse thoroughly and always wipe front to back.
3. Drink plenty of fluids to keep well hydrated.
4. Don't hold off urinating when you need to go and don't rush to finish; give yourself time to completely empty your bladder.
5. Always urinate after having intercourse.

## What do I do if I suspect I have a UTI?

Contact your primary care doctor to have your urine tested. **Don't wait** until the symptoms are severe. A simple bladder infection can easily be treated with antibiotics. If untreated it can quickly turn into a kidney infection (pyelonephritis) which can be more complicated to manage.

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Author: Rachel M. Orfei, AGCNS-BC  
Reviewers: Mary C. Nowlin, PA-C  
Edited by: Karelyn Munro BA

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