

Urinary Tract Infections (UTI)

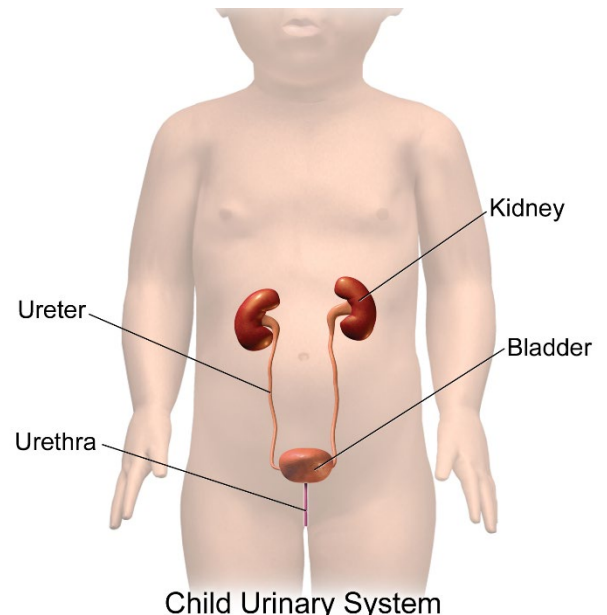
What is a Urinary Tract Infection?

A urinary tract infection 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 and this handout refers to lower urinary tract infections (aka bladder infection).

What increases the risk of Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) in Children?

Some children are prone to lower urinary tract (bladder) infections. Conditions that increase the possibility of bladder infections include:

- Infrequent urination
- incomplete emptying
- Constipation
- fecal incontinence
- high bladder pressures
- blockages
- vesicoureteral reflux: a condition where urine in the bladder back up into the kidneys, instead of moving down to the urethra
- other anatomic problems



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- skin irritation (diaper rash)
- bacteria or yeast on the skin
- neurogenic bladder - a condition where the bladder does not function properly because of problems with nerves
- stones or other foreign objects in the urinary tract

The presence of problems such as vesicoureteral reflux can turn a lower tract (bladder) infection into a kidney infection.

How is UTI treated?

Active urinary tract infections are treated with antibiotics. The period of treatment is generally a few days to a week. In most cases the child can take the medicine by mouth, but severe infections may require giving the antibiotic directly into the bloodstream with an IV.

What steps can we take to prevent infection?

1. Empty your bladder every 2 hours, instead of waiting until you have to pee. Frequent voiding lowers the odds of infections because the bacteria that cause urinary infections double about every 20 minutes. Drink frequently to ensure the bladder has urine and can empty.
2. Take the time to empty the bladder completely.
3. Avoid pushing or straining while urinating.
4. Girls - sit back on the toilet with legs spread apart when you urinate.
5. Boys - if your pants have a zipper/fly, open it completely
6. Boys - don't squeeze the penis.

7. Drink an extra 8-16 ounces of water three times a day. Drink water each morning, in the afternoon, and a third time in the evening. This dilutes the urine and encourages frequent voiding.
8. Children who get repeated infections can take a small dose of antibiotic medicine daily. These are called prophylactic antibiotics.
9. Avoid constipation. There is a close relationship between the muscles and nerves that control bladder functions and those that control bowel movements (pooping). The bladder and the colon are close together in the body. Large amounts of stool in the colon can put pressure on the bladder. This can cause the bladder to not fill as much as it should, or to contract when the bladder is not supposed to contract. This large amount of stool can also cause the bladder to not empty well. Treating and preventing constipation can prevent urinary tract infections.
10. Take 1 tablet of chewable 250mg vitamin C each evening. This may not be suitable for all people.

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