

## **Repeat Urinary Tract Infections (UTI)**

### **What is a urinary tract infection (UTI)?**

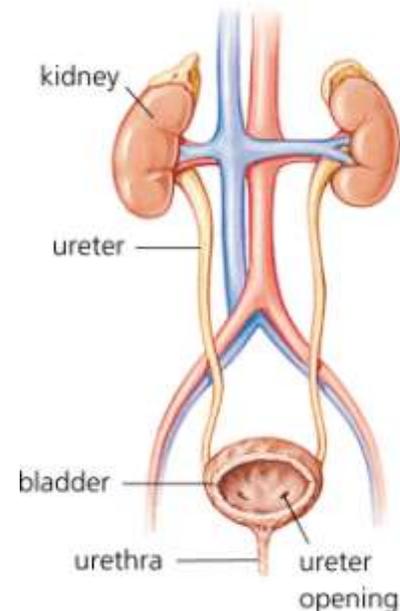
The urinary tract includes the kidney, ureter, bladder, and urethra. An infection can occur anywhere along this tract. The infection is called a UTI. When it affects the:

- Bladder, it is called cystitis. This is a bladder infection.
- Kidney(s), it is called pyelonephritis. This is a kidney infection.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Your child may have one or more of these symptoms:

- Pain when urinating (peeing).
- Bad smelling urine.
- Blood in the urine.
- Urinary accidents.
- Going to the bathroom often.
- Sudden urge to go to the bathroom
- Abdominal or back pain.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Fever.



### **What causes them?**

Often, the exact cause for the UTI is not known. UTIs are caused by many kinds of bacteria. Some children are more likely to have bacteria that cause problems in the urinary tract. These children often end up with an infection.

### **Problems that can increase the chance of having a UTI:**

- Constipation. More stool (poop) in the bowels can cause bladder infections. Your child should normally have a soft, hot dog shaped stool at least once a day that is not painful or hard to pass. Hard, pebble-like stools and stools that clog the toilet may be a sign of a problem. Talk to your health care provider if you think your child is constipated.
- Not emptying the bladder (voiding) often enough can cause bacteria to live in the bladder. This can cause bacteria to multiply and lead to an infection.
- Not drinking enough fluids allows bacteria to stay in the bladder longer.
- Poor hygiene normally does **not** cause UTIs. However, good hygiene is important.

If your child has one or more of these problems, trying to correct it may stop or decrease how often your child has UTIs.

**More testing** may need to be done. Sometimes a specific cause can be found with tests that look at the structure of your child's kidneys and bladder. Depending on your child's problems, their healthcare provider may recommend one of these tests:

- **Kidney ultrasound.** This test looks at the structure of the kidneys and bladder.
- **Voiding cystourethrogram (VCUG).** This is a bladder x-ray to look for kidney reflux. When the urine backs up in the ureters it is called reflux. Reflux may increase the chance for infection and fever.

### **How are they treated?**

- Your child's health care provider may prescribe oral antibiotics. Make sure your child takes all of this medicine, even if they are feeling well within a few days.
- If your child has had many infections in a short period of time, they may be started on a daily low dose antibiotic. This medicine will help prevent infections.
- Have your child drink more fluids.
- Treat constipation.
- Have your child go to the bathroom every 2 to 3 hours.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has:

- Symptoms of infection. This includes:
  - Painful urination, blood in urine, or bad smelling urine.
  - Having to go to the bathroom more often.
  - Urinary accidents.
  - Fever.
- Special health care needs not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**