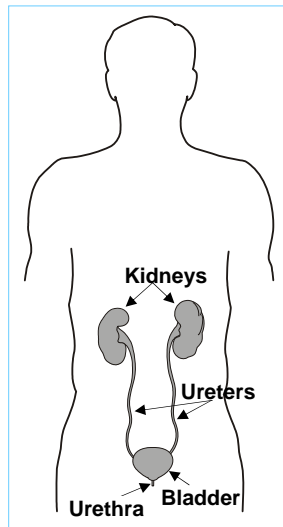


Emergency Services

# Kidney Infection

## What is a kidney infection?

A kidney infection is when you have bacteria in the kidneys. Bacteria get into kidneys by moving from the urethra into the bladder. From there, it moves up through the ureters into the kidneys.



When you have bacteria in your bladder, you have a bladder infection (also called a urinary tract infection). People with bladder infection can get a kidney infection if the bladder infection is not treated. If a kidney infection is not treated, the infection can damage your kidneys.

## Go to the nearest Emergency Department if:

- You have severe pain in your back or side that will not go away, even with pain medication.
- You feel very sick to your stomach (nauseated) and are throwing up (vomiting).
- You can not drink water or swallow your medications because you feel so sick.
- You have chills and a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F).
- Your urine smells bad, or looks cloudy, brown, or red.
- You have problems urinating such as stinging, burning, pain when you go to the toilet (urinate), or you can not go at all.
- If you become dizzy, lightheaded, or confused.

## How to take care of yourself at home

Take antibiotics exactly the way the doctor has told you to take them. Do not stop taking the antibiotics until you have taken all the pills – even if you feel better.

If we need to give you antibiotics directly into your bloodstream through an intravenous, you must return to the hospital every day for this treatment.

Return to: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day. A good way to do this is to drink one glass of water every hour while you are awake.

Take medicine for the pain, fever, or upset stomach if needed. Check with your family doctor or pharmacist as to what will work best for you.

## Kidney Infection - *continued*

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### Ways to prevent kidney infections

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.
- Take showers rather than baths. Do not use bubble bath or bath oils.
- Empty your bladder as soon as you feel the need to go. Do not hold your urine for a long time.
- Empty your bladder after having sex.
- For women, wipe yourself from front to back after going to the toilet.

### To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online to [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

### What the words mean

Kidneys (sounds like kid-nee) – These bean-shaped organs take waste out of the blood and make urine.

Ureters (sounds like yer-et-ters) - These two small tubes carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

Bladder (sounds like blah-der) – A hollow organ that collects and holds urine until it can move out of the body.

Urethra (sounds like yer-ee-thra) - A small short tube that carries the urine from the bladder out of the body.

Urine (sounds like yer-in) - The waste fluid made by the kidneys, commonly called 'pee'.

Urinate (sounds like yer-in-ate) – The action of moving urine out of the body, commonly called 'going to the toilet' or 'going pee'.

Adapted with permission from 'Kidney Infection – Going Home' (July 2010) by Providence Health Care.