

# Kidney Transplant – Preventing Urinary Tract Infections

A 'urinary tract infection' (or U.T.I.) is caused by bacteria entering through the urethra (where urine comes out of the body). The most common type of infection is a bladder infection but could also spread your kidneys.

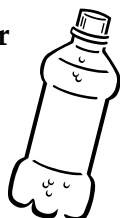
## How do you know you have one?

You might have a urinary tract infection if you notice 1 or more of these signs:

- need to urinate more often
- pain or burning when urinating
- sudden urges to urinate
- chills or fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F)
- pain in your lower belly (abdomen)
- pain in the sides of your back
- feeling sick to your stomach (nauseated)

## How to prevent an infection

- ✓ **Drink between 1.5 to 2 litres of water every day**, unless the transplant team tells you something different. Drinking water helps flush the bacteria out of your bladder and urethra.



- ✓ **Empty your bladder.**

Go to the toilet as soon as you feel the urge, rather than holding it in.

If you feel your bladder might not be empty, wait a few minutes and try to urinate again.

- ✓ **Wear cotton underwear.**

Bacteria grow in moist places. Cotton does not trap moisture.

- ✓ **Prevent constipation.**

Constipation increases your chances of getting an infection. To prevent it, increase the fibre in your diet, drink more fluids, and walk more often.

- ✓ **Empty your bladder after having sex.**

This helps prevent bacteria from getting into the urethra. Also drink a full glass of water.

- ✓ **Get plenty of Vitamin C.**

Vitamin C makes urine more acidic. Bacteria do not like to live in an acidic environment. Vitamin C is found in fruits and vegetables. Foods high in Vitamin C include broccoli, and citrus fruits and their juices (such as oranges).



## When to get help

If you have one or more signs of a urinary tract infection, contact the Transplant Clinic or your family doctor as soon as possible. If you cannot contact the Clinic or your doctor, go to the nearest walk-in clinic.

If you go to your doctor or a walk-in clinic, **insist they send a urine\* sample** to the laboratory for testing. If you are given a prescription for antibiotics and before taking them, always check with the Transplant Clinic or your transplant pharmacy.

Another option is to drop off a urine sample at the laboratory as part of your standing order for bloodwork from the Transplant Clinic. Then call the Clinic to let them know you did this.

\*If you have an ileal conduit, collect urine directly from the stoma or a brand new pouch.