When to get help

If you have one or more signs of a urinary tract infection, see a doctor as soon as possible.

You might need to do a urine test to see what type of bacteria or germ is causing the infection. You might be given a prescription for antibiotics to treat the infection.

If you cannot contact your doctor, go to the nearest walk-in clinic.

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'.

To learn more, it's good to ask:

✓ Your doctor

✓ Your pharmacist

✓ HealthLinkBC   **8-1-1** (7-1-1 TTY)
Call any time you have any health questions or concerns (open 24 hours). Available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

Online resources

⌕ Search 'urinary tract infection', then look under 'prevention'

HealthLinkBC   www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Mayoclinic (USA)   www.mayoclinic.org

National Health Services (UK)   www.nhs.uk

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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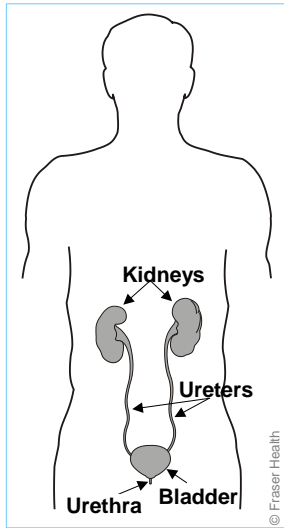To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Preventing a Urinary Tract Infection After Surgery

fraserhealth

What is a 'urinary tract infection'?

The urinary tract is made up of the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra.

A urinary tract infection (or U.T.I.) is when bacteria or germs enter the urinary tract and cause an infection.

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 can I prevent an infection?

✓ **Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day.**
Drinking more water helps flush bacteria or germs out of your system.

If you have a heart or kidney problem, ask your doctor* or dietitian how much water you can have.

✓ **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.

✓ **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.

✓ **Drink cranberry juice or take cranberry supplements.**
Some people say drinking a glass of cranberry juice once a day or taking cranberry supplements can help prevent infections.

If taking the blood thinner warfarin, **do not** drink cranberry juice or take cranberry supplements.

Tips for Women

✓ Always wipe from front to back after using the toilet.

✓ If you use sanitary napkins or wear incontinence pads, change them often.

✓ Wear cotton underwear or underwear with a cotton crotch.

✓ Try not to wear tight fitting pants.

✗ Do not use bubble baths, douches, powder and sprays.

✗ Do not use diaphragms.

✗ Do not use spermicidal condoms. (Instead use non-spermicidal lubricant condoms.)

Tips for Men:

✓ Clean your penis and genital area every day, especially if you are not circumcised.
The foreskin can hold germs, increasing your chances getting an infection.
To clean, gently pull back the foreskin before washing around the tip of your penis.

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*Note: When we use 'doctor', we mean either doctor or nurse practitioner.