

FAST FACTS: Urinary Tract Infection Pain

Pain due to infection in the urinary tract can be from the passage of urine. It can also be felt over the bladder or flank area. A urinary tract infection (UTI) can vary from a simple infection to a potentially life-threatening one. Treatment of a UTI with limited bacteria in the urine is not recommended. Using antibiotics for a mild infection can increase the rate of adverse side effects and increase the rate of recurrent infections due to multiple drug resistant bacteria.



✓ Normal Changes of Aging/Risks of UTI

- The ability to resist a UTI is lower if your loved one has other conditions, such as diabetes, cancer, or autoimmune disorders
- In women, estrogen deficiency thins vaginal tissue causing more vulnerability to bacteria
- An enlarged prostate in older males can cause retention of urine, which predisposes men to chronic infection due to entrapped bacteria
- Incontinence and overall functional decline can further weaken the ability to fight infection
- The use of indwelling urinary catheters, which may increase with age, increases the risk of UTIs, hospitalizations, and antibiotic resistance

✓ Assessment

- Assessment by your loved one's healthcare provider should include vital signs and review of mental status and level of pain
- Presence of back pain with tenderness (one side) could indicate a kidney infection
- The healthcare provider will review your loved one's history of UTIs or catheterizations, kidney stones, or recent dehydration
- Mental status change is a MAJOR and common symptom of infection
- Healthcare provider will obtain a urine sample

✓ Possible Intervention

- Prescription or over the counter (OTC) medications, depending upon the diagnosis
- Non-Drug Treatments include maintaining a calm environment, adequate fluid intake, and providing support as needed to maintain safety

✓ What Else You Should Do

- Write down and share information about your loved one's pain with their healthcare provider
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to the healthcare provider
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary

References:

1. WebMD. 2021. *Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)*. Accessed 2.21.2022. <https://www.webmd.com/women/guide/your-guide-urinary-tract-infections>
2. Mayo Clinic. April 23, 2021. *Urinary tract infection (UTI)*. Accessed 2.21.2022. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/urinary-tract-infection/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353453>