

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.

Revised January 2022

References

WebMD. 2021. *Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)*. <https://www.webmd.com/women/guide/your-guide-urinary-tract-infections>.

Mayo Clinic. April 23, 2021. *Urinary tract infection (UTI)*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/urinary-tract-infection/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353453>.