

About Urinary Tract Infection - Prevention and Treatments

Urinary tract infection, or UTI, is colonization of microorganisms in the urinary tract in such an amount and such a way that damages or symptoms are produced. When only the urethra and the bladder is affected, it is called lower urinary tract infection. When the ureters and the kidneys are affected, the name used is "upper urinary tract infection".

WHAT CAUSES URINARY TRACT INFECTION

UTI is commonly caused by bacteria that also are present in the normal flora in and around body openings and in the digestive tract, as for example the bacterium *Escherichia Coli*. Most often the bacteria enter the urinary tract through the urethral opening. Women more easily get urinary tract infection because they have a shorter urethra so that the bacteria have a shorter way to get into the bladder.

The diseases Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis are normally not called UTI, even though these infections often affect the urinary tract.

Defects in the urinary system can make a person susceptible for UTI, like strictures or valve-like structures in the urethra and defects causing reflux from the bladder up through the ureters. Physical damages in the urinary tract can also make it more easy for bacteria to colonize and make infections.

Use of catheters or other instruments in the urinary tract can introduce bacteria and also cause damages that give the bacteria an easy opportunity to infect.

THE SYMPTOMS OF URINARY TRACT INFECTION

UTI can occur acutely with very distinct symptoms. UTI can also develop slowly and chronically with only small symptoms for a long time.

The symptoms by lower UTI are:

- Itching during urination.
- Pain in the bladder region.
- Urge to urinate, even though there is little urine in the bladder.
- Need to urinate during nights.
- Fever, usually mild.
- Cloudy urine with a bad smell.
- Pus discharged from the urethra or blended with the urine.
- Sometimes blood in the urine.

By upper urinary tract infection the same symptoms often occur, and in addition these symptoms will be felt:

- Nausea and vomiting.
- Pain in the sides of the back and sides of the stomach, at the height of the kidneys, and often downwards towards the bladder region.
- Feeling of pressure in the stomach region.
- High fever with chills and shaking.
- Strong fatigue.

Symptoms of UTI must always be investigated, especially blood in the urine, since the cause can be a more serious disease.

COMPLICATIONS CAUSED BY URINARY TRACT INFECTION

By upper UTI, the infection can spread deep into the kidney tissues and destroy the structures that excrete urine. This process can gradually lead to kidney failure. The infection can cause growth of scar tissue in the urinary tract, for example in the urethra, that causes obstruction and problems with urination.

By men the infection can spread to the prostate and into the reproductive organs and destroy the function of the reproductive system.

When a pregnant woman suffers from UTI, the child tend to be born with a too low birth weight.

DIAGNOSIS OF URINARY TRACT INFECTION

UTI is diagnosed by a urine specimen. The specimen is analyzed for substances produces by the disease process, like nitrites, leukocytes or leukocyte esterase. One also performs urine culture to confirm the presence of the bacteria.

When children have been diagnosed with UTI, in is useful to perform urine flow studies and radiologic studies of the urinary tract afterwards to see if there is urine reflux up to the bladder or other abnormalities in the urinary tract. This is sometimes done also by adults if UTI often recur.

STANDARD TREATMENT OF URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Urinary tract infection is commonly treated with antibiotica, like: trimethoprim, cephalosporins, nitrofurantoin, or a fluoroquinolone (ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin).

Children that have been diagnosed with some urinary tract defect are often given long term treatment with small doses of antibiotics, but recent studies have thrown doubt upon the validity of this regime.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OF URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Although standard treatment is usually effective, it does no always manage to beat down a chronic UTI. Treatment with low doses of antibiotics to prevent new outbreaks of UTI can give side effects and is neither always effective.

Alternative measures for treatment can therefore be useful in addition to the standard drugs, and the same alternatives can be useful to prevent new outbreaks of UTI.

Cranberry and blueberry can help against UTI by eliminating the bacteria causing UTI. These herbs can be taken as juice or as tea made from dried berries, and they are also found as concentrates in capsules.

The sugar type D-mannose also seems to help eliminating infectious bacteria from the urinary tract.

Cranberry, blueberry and D-mannose seem to help by sticking to the bacteria or to the inside lining of the urinary tract and make it difficult for the bacteria to adhere to the inside walls and infect the tissues. Instead the bacteria are flushed out by the urine.

Goldenseal root and Uva ursi also have effects against bacteria infecting the urinary tract.

Remedies that alter the PH of the urine to be more acidic or more alkaline also seem to counteract infectious bacteria. It seems that the bacteria thrive only in a very narrow Ph range. Mineral supplements that contain citrate alter the Ph in an alkaline direction, and can be used for this purpose. Cranberry seems to give a more acidic urine and helps also this way.

Some studies indicate that acupuncture can help to hinder new outbreak of urinary tract infection.

LIFESTYLE MEASURES TO PREVENT URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Many lifestyle measures can be used to prevent the outbreak of UTI and help to cure UTI.

- Wearing clothes that hinders the lower body to get cold is useful by many peoples experience.
- Drinking much water causes the infectious bacteria to be flushed out much easier.
- To urinate after intercourse and cleaning the urethral opening eliminates infectious bacteria transmitted by the sexual act before they can invade the urinary tract.
- Using condoms by anal intercourse can hinder infectious bacteria in the rectum to enter a mans urethra.
- After anal intercourse, vaginal intercourse should be avoided without a good wash first.
- Having a good intimate hygiene, and wiping from the front and backwards by toilet visits can hinder bacteria from entering the urinary tract.
- Warm sitting baths without soap that can irritate can ameliorate the pain during, UTI and may enhance the healing process.

About the Author

Knut Holt is an internet consultant and marketer focusing on health items. TO FIND anti-aging supplements, medicines against UTI, acne, eczema, rosacea scars, wrinkles, other skin problems and natural help against over-weight, hypertension, heart disease, hypothyroidism, hemorrhoids, depression and other common health problems, PLEASE VISIT:--- <http://www.panteraconsulting.com/salg2b.htm> ---Free to reprint with the author's name and link.

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