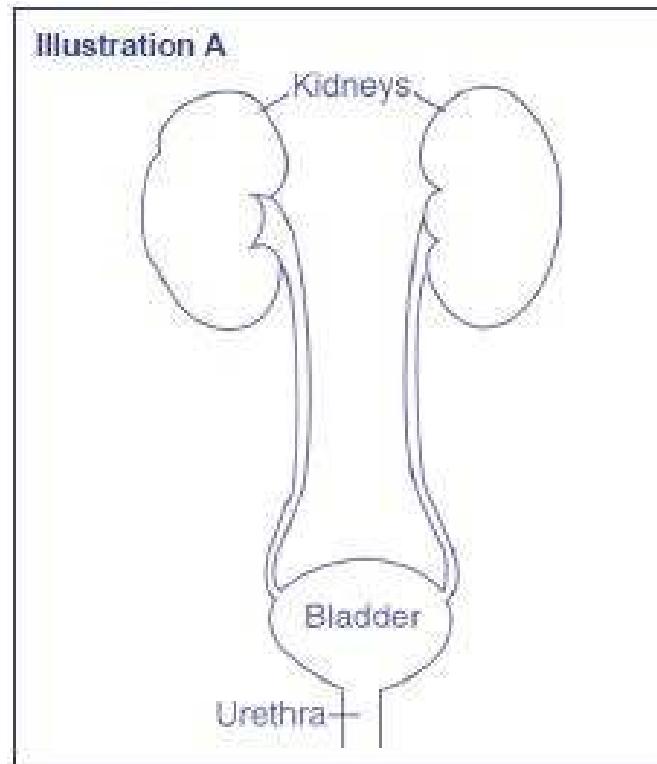


Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are a common problem for women. Bacteria often travel from the urethra to the bladder, causing a bladder infection (see Illustration A). Occasionally, the infection may also affect the kidneys.



Patients with urinary tract infections may complain of some or all of the following symptoms

- Lower abdominal pain or pressure
- Frequent and urgent urination
- Burning or stinging during urination
- Back pain
- Fever
- Blood in the urine
- Dark, foul-smelling urine

Urinary tract infections usually get better on their own within a few days, and drinking plenty of fluids can help. Sometimes, a short course of antibiotics for 2 or 3 days is required.

It is helpful to provide a urine specimen that can be sent for testing when the symptoms start, and this must always be done prior to starting antibiotics.

There are a number of things you can do to prevent urinary tract infections:

- Avoid long intervals between urination.
- Have at least eight to ten drinks (mug-size) daily. These could be water, cranberry juice, squash or other fluids. Caffeinated drinks are best avoided.
- Shower instead of taking a bath. Avoid using bubble bath or other cosmetic bath products.
- Avoid using any feminine hygiene sprays and scented douches.
- Avoid using a vaginal diaphragm for birth control.
- Empty your bladder after sexual intercourse, as sexual relations can often trigger UTIs.
- After urination, wipe from front to back.
- After a bowel movement, clean the area around the anus gently, wiping from front to back and never repeating with the same tissue. Soft, white, non-scented tissue is recommended.

Some patients find that drinking cranberry juice regularly can reduce the numbers of infections they get. A large glass of juice taken twice a day. Cranberry juice should be taken with caution if you take Warfarin tablets. If you don't like cranberry juice, then cranberry capsules are also available.

**This information has been prepared by Mr Owen Cole MBBS FRCS (Urol),
Consultant Urologist at the Medical Specialist Group LLP. www.msg.gg.**