### Possible urinary signs & symptoms

**Key signs/symptoms:**
- Dysuria: Burning pain when passing urine (wee)
- New nocturia: Needing to pass urine in the night
- Cloudy urine: Visible cloudy colour when passing urine

**Other severe signs/symptoms:**
- Frequency: Passing urine more often than usual
- Urgency: Feeling the need to pass urine immediately
- Haematuria: Blood in your urine
- Suprapubic pain: Pain in your lower tummy

**Other things to consider:**
- Recent sexual history
  - Inflammation due to sexual activity can feel similar to the symptoms of a UTI.
- Pain in your lower tummy

### The outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All women: If none or only one of: dysuria, new nocturia, cloudy urine; AND/OR vaginal discharge</th>
<th>Self-care and pain relief.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Antibiotics less likely to help.</td>
<td>• Symptoms may get better on their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually lasts 5 to 7 days.</td>
<td>• Delayed or backup prescription with self-care and pain relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You may need a urine test to check for a UTI.</td>
<td>• Start antibiotics if symptoms:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Get worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not get a little better with self-care within 48 hours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-pregnant women: If 2 or more of: dysuria, new nocturia, cloudy urine; OR bacteria detected in urine; AND NO vaginal discharge</th>
<th>Immediate antibiotics prescription plus self-care.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Antibiotics are more likely to help.</td>
<td>If mild symptoms, delayed or back-up antibiotic prescription plus self-care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You should start to improve within 48 hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Symptoms usually last 3 days.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Pregnant women: If suspected UTI. | Immediate antibiotic prescription. |

### Recommended care

- Self-care and pain relief.
  - Stop bacteria spreading from your bowel into your bladder. Wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
  - Pass urine as soon as you feel the urge.
  - Avoid waiting to pass urine.
- Antibiotics are less likely to help. Start antibiotics if symptoms:
  - Get worse.
  - Do not get a little better with self-care within 48 hours.

### Types of urinary tract infection (UTI)

UTIs are caused by bacteria getting into your urethra or bladder, usually from your gut. Infections may occur in different parts of the urinary tract.

- **Kidneys (make urine)**
  - Pyelonephritis (pie-lo-nef-right-is).
  - Infection in the upper urinary tract.
  - Not covered in this leaflet and always needs antibiotics.
- **Bladder (stores urine)**
  - Cystitis (sis-tight-is).
- **Urethra (takes urine out of the body)**
  - Infection or inflammation in the urethra.
  - Urethritis (your-th-rit-iss).

### Self-care to help yourself get better more quickly

- Drink enough fluids to stop you feeling thirsty. Aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses including water, decaffeinated and sugar-free drinks.
- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen at regular intervals for pain relief, if you have had no previous side effects.
- You could try taking cranberry capsules or cystitis sachets. These are effective for some women. There is currently no evidence to support their use.
- Consider the risk factors in the ‘Options to help prevent a UTI’ column to reduce future UTIs.

### When should you get help?

- **Contact your GP practice or NHS 111**
  - Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are.
  - You have shivering, chills and muscle pain.
  - You feel confused, or are very drowsy.
  - You have not passed urine all day.
  - You are vomiting.
  - You see blood in your urine.
  - Your temperature is above 38°C or less than 36°C.
  - You have kidney pain in your back just under the ribs.
  - Your symptoms get worse.
  - Your symptoms are not starting to improve within 48 hours of taking antibiotics.

### Options to help prevent a UTI

- Antibiotics can be lifesaving. But antibiotics are not always needed for urinary symptoms.
- Antibiotics taken by mouth, for any reason, affect our gut bacteria making some resistant.
- Antibiotic resistance means that the antibiotics cannot kill that bacteria.
- Antibiotic resistant bacteria can remain in your gut for at least a year after taking an antibiotic.
- Common side effects to taking antibiotics include thrush, rashes, vomiting and diarrhoea. Seek medical advice if you are worried.
- Keep antibiotics working, only take them when advised by a health professional. This way they are more likely to work for a future UTI.

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### All women: If none or only one of: dysuria, new nocturia, cloudy urine; AND/OR vaginal discharge

- **Self-care and pain relief.**
  - Stop bacteria spreading from your bowel into your bladder. Wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
  - Pass urine as soon as you feel the urge.
  - Avoid waiting to pass urine. Wash the external vagina area with water before and after sex to wash away any bacteria that may be near the opening to the urethra.
  - Drink enough fluids to make sure you wee regularly throughout the day, especially during hot weather.

### If you have a recurrent UTI, also consider the following:

- **Cranberry products and D-mannose:** Some women find these effective, but there is currently poor evidence to support this.
- **After the menopause:** You could consider topical hormonal treatment, for example, vaginal creams.