# TREATING YOUR INFECTION – URINARY TRACT INFECTION (UTI)

For women under 65 years with suspected lower urinary tract infections (UTIs) or lower recurrent UTIs (cystitis or urethritis)

## Possible urinary signs & symptoms

**Key signs/symptoms:**
- Dysuria: Burning pain when passing urine (wee)\(^1,2\)
- New nocturia: Needing to pass urine in the night\(^3\)
- Cloudy urine: Visible cloudy colour when passing urine\(^4\)

**Other severe signs/symptoms:**
- Frequency: Passing urine more often than usual\(^5\)
- Urgency: Feeling the need to pass urine immediately\(^6\)
- Haematuria: Blood in your urine\(^7\)
- Suprapubic pain: Pain in your lower tummy\(^8\)

**Other things to consider:**
- Recent sexual history\(^9\)
- Non-pregnant women: 2 or more of: dysuria, new nocturia, cloudy urine; OR bacteria detected in urine; AND NO vaginal discharge\(^1\)
- Pregnant women: Always request urine culture\(^1\)
- Changes during menopause\(^10,11\)

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

**When should you get help?**
- Contact your GP practice or contact NHS

The following symptoms are possible signs of serious infection and should be assessed urgently\(^1,12,13\):  
1. Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are\(^1\):
   - You have shivering, chills and muscle pain\(^1\).
   - You feel confused, or are very drowsy\(^1\).
   - You have not passed urine all day\(^1\).
   - You are vomiting\(^1\).
   - You see blood in your urine\(^1\).
   - Your temperature is above 38°C or less than 36°C\(^1\).
   - You have kidney pain in your back just under the ribs\(^1\).
   - Your symptoms get worse\(^1\).
   - Your symptoms are not starting to improve within 48 hours of taking antibiotics\(^1\).

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<tr>
<th>All women:</th>
<th>The outcome</th>
<th>Recommended care</th>
<th>Types of urinary tract infection (UTI)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If none or only one of: dysuria, new nocturia, cloudy urine; AND/OR vaginal discharge(^4,10)</td>
<td>Self-care and pain relief, if symptoms:</td>
<td>Delayed or backup prescription with self-care and pain relief(^13,14)</td>
<td>UTIs are caused by bacteria getting into your urethra or bladder, usually from your gut(^20). Infections may occur in different parts of the urinary tract(^20).</td>
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<td>Antibiotics less likely to help(^10)</td>
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<td>Usually lasts 5 to 7 days(^11,12)</td>
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<td>You may need a urine test to check for a UTI</td>
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<td>If 2 or more of: dysuria, new nocturia, cloudy urine; OR bacteria detected in urine; AND NO vaginal discharge(^1)</td>
<td>Immediate antibiotics prescription(^16,17,18) plus self-care(^1)</td>
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<td>Antibiotics more likely to help(^15)</td>
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<td>You should start to improve within 48 hours(^15)</td>
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<td>Symptoms usually last 3 days(^15)</td>
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## Options to help prevent a UTI

**Antibiotic resistance**

- Antibiotics can be lifesaving. But antibiotics are not always needed for urinary symptoms\(^33\).
- Antibiotics taken by mouth, for any reason, affect our gut bacteria making some resistant\(^34\).
- Antibiotic resistance means that the antibiotics cannot kill that bacteria\(^32,34\).
- Antibiotic resistant bacteria can remain in your gut for at least a year after taking an antibiotic\(^34\).
- Common side effects to taking antibiotics include thrush, rashes, vomiting and diarrhoea\(^35\).
- Seek medical advice if you are worried\(^34\).
- Keep antibiotics working, only take them when advised by a health professional\(^32\). This way they are more likely to work for a future UTI\(^36\).

**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\(^21,22\).
- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen at regular intervals for pain relief, if you have had no previous side effects\(^11,23\).
- You could try taking cranberry capsules or cystitis sachets\(^24,25\). These are effective for some women. There is currently no evidence to support their use\(^26\).
- Consider the risk factors in the ‘Options to help prevent UTI’ column to reduce future UTIs\(^21\).

**When you should get help?**
- Contact your GP practice or contact NHS

**Options to help prevent a UTI**

- **Kidneys (make urine)**
  - Pyelonephritis (pie-lo-nef-right-is). 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\(^20\).
  - Urethritis (your-ith-right-is).  

- **Infections may**
  - Infections usually from your gut. Infections may occur in different parts of the urinary tract\(^20\).

- **UTIs are caused by**
  - Bacteria getting into your urethra or bladder, usually from your gut\(^20\). Infections may occur in different parts of the urinary tract\(^20\).

**RATIONALE:** A SIGN guideline, outlining symptoms of bacterial urinary tract infections as: dysuria; frequency of urination; suprapubic tenderness; urgency; polyuria; haematuria. Expert consensus is that, in women with symptoms of vaginal itch or discharge, alternative diagnoses to UTI should be explored. This guideline also provides details of UTI symptoms suggestive of pyelonephritis, including: loin pain; flank tenderness; fever; rigors; other manifestations of systemic inflammatory response, and suggests admission to hospital if there is no response to antibiotic treatment within 24 hours.


**RATIONALE:** A systematic review of diagnostic studies, aiming to review the accuracy and precision of history taking and physical examination for the diagnosis of UTI in women. Results indicated that the presence of vaginal discharge or vaginal irritation substantially reduced the probability of UTI to around 20%. Additionally, this review states that dysuria with frequency together increase the chances of UTI to 90%. This review also identifies symptoms of pyelonephritis as: fever; back pain; nausea; vomiting.


**RATIONALE:** An editorial, exploring the prevalence of nocturia in different age groups of both men and women with lower urinary tract infections. Results indicate that whilst nocturia is more prevalent in adults over the age of 75, it does occur in all ages with bacterial urinary tract infections. As there is no universally accepted definition of nocturia, there is a wide variation in the reported prevalence of nocturia. Nevertheless, nocturia is a common symptom, with similar prevalence in both men and women across all ages, with proven UTI (men 16% to 55%; women 9% to 51%).


**RATIONALE:** A validation study to determine the value of using urinary symptoms and signs and urine dipsticks for diagnosis of confirmed UTI. The study individuals included 434 women with at least 2 urinary symptoms of UTI and no vaginal discharge from across 62 different practices in England. Clinical symptoms and dipstick results were assessed against laboratory cultures. 66% of women had a confirmed UTI. No symptoms or signs or combination was able to confirm UTI with absolute certainty. The negative predictive value when nitrite, leukocytes, and blood are all negative was 76%. The positive predictive value for having nitrite and either blood or leukocytes was 92%. When clinical variables were examined, the positive predictive value was 82% for women with all three of cloudy urine, dysuria of any degree, and new nocturia to any degree; 74% for two, 68% for one. The negative predictive value was 67% for none of these three features. The authors conclude that though dipsticks can moderately improve diagnostic precision, they are poor at ruling out infection. Clinical strategies need to take into account poor negative predictive values. **Therefore the steering group in discussion agreed that a strategy of using a combination of clinical score and urine dipstick will optimise correct use of antibiotics.** As at least 74% with two of dysuria, cloudy urine or nocturia will have a proven UTI it is reasonable to prescribe empirically in these patients. In patients with only one of dysuria, cloudy urine or nocturia, or none of these symptoms but they have other severe urinary symptoms a urine dipstick will help determine who should be given empirical antibiotics: if nitrite is
positive or Both WBC and RBC are positive UTI is likely, if Nitrite is negative and WBC positive only half will have UTI, if all dipstick results are negative UTI is much less likely. Depending on the likelihood of UTI and severity of symptoms, then an immediate or back-up or no antibiotic strategy can be discussed with the patient.


**RATIONALE:** A case-control study of two populations in Seattle (USA), in which 229 university women and female health maintenance organisation enrollees with recurrent urinary tract infections were recruited. Independent risk factors for recurrent UTIs included: intercourse frequency within the previous month without washing (OR 5.8; 95% CI 3.1 to 10.6); spermicide use in the last 12 months (OR 1.8; 95% CI 1.1 to 2.9); new sexual partner during the past year (OR 1.9; 95% CI 1.2 to 3.2). Advice is given on how to prevent recurrent UTIs, including: voiding after intercourse; increased fluid intake; avoiding use of condoms with spermicide-coated lubricants.


**RATIONALE:** A cross-sectional sample study, aiming to determine if urinary symptoms or urinary tract infections were associated with sexually transmitted infections, and which history, clinical, and laboratory findings could distinguish these infections in symptomatic women. 296 sexually active females between the ages of 14 and 22 attending a hospital-based teen health centre or emergency department were recruited. Genitourinary symptoms, medical and sexual history, and urinalysis results were recorded. An STI was defined as a vaginal swab positive for *Trichomonas vaginalis*, or a urine nucleic acid amplification test positive for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, or *Chlamydia trachomatis*. A urine culture with >10,000 colonies of a single pathogen was considered to be a positive UTI. In the full sample, prevalence of UTI and STI were 17% and 33%, respectively, and neither urinary symptoms or confirmed UTI were significantly associated with STI. Further analyses of the 51% with urinary symptoms indicated that positive urine leukocytes, more than one partner in the last three months, and a history of STI predicted STI. Urinalysis results identified four groups: normal urinalysis (67% had no infection); positive nitrites or protein (55% had UTI); positive leukocytes or blood (62% had STI); both nitrites/protein and leukocytes/blood positive (28% had STI and 65% had UTI). The authors conclude that, since there is a similarity in symptoms, adolescent females with urinary symptoms should be tested for both UTI and STIs. Urinalysis results may also be helpful to direct initial therapy.


**RATIONALE:** A review of evidence based approaches for the evaluation of adult patients with dysuria. The authors state that the most common cause of acute dysuria is infection, especially cystitis. Other infectious causes include urethritis, sexually transmitted infections, and vaginitis. Non-infectious inflammatory causes include a foreign body in the urinary tract and dermatologic conditions. Non-inflammatory causes of dysuria include medication use, urethral anatomic abnormalities, local trauma, and interstitial cystitis/bladder pain syndrome. An initial targeted history includes features of a local cause (e.g., vaginal or urethral irritation), risk factors for a complicated urinary tract infection (e.g., male sex, pregnancy, presence of urologic obstruction, recent procedure), and symptoms of pyelonephritis. Women with vulvovaginal symptoms should be evaluated for vaginitis. Any complicating features or recurrent symptoms warrant a history, physical examination, urinalysis, and urine culture. Findings from the secondary evaluation, selected laboratory tests, and directed imaging studies enable physicians to progress through a logical evaluation and determine the cause of dysuria or make an appropriate referral.

**RATIONALE:** Consensus report from 2012. The Board of Directors of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) and the Board of Trustees of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) acknowledged the need to review current terminology associated with genitourinary tract symptoms related to menopause. To do this they cosponsored a terminology consensus conference, which was held in May 2013 and agreed that the term genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM) is a medically more accurate, all-encompassing, and more publicly acceptable term than vulvovaginal atrophy. Symptoms of GSM are associated with a decrease in oestrogen and other sex steroids involving changes to the labia majora/minora, clitoris, vestibule/introitus, vagina, urethra and bladder. The syndrome may include but is not limited to genital symptoms of dryness, burning, and irritation; sexual symptoms of lack of lubrication, discomfort or pain, and impaired function; and urinary symptoms of urgency, dysuria and recurrent urinary tract infections. Women may present with some or all of the signs and symptoms. The term was presented and discussed at the annual meeting of each society. GSM is currently used as the as a term to cover both atrophic vaginitis and vaginal atrophy in more recent references found during the review for the diagnostic guidance.


**RATIONALE:** This multi-centric study was performed in order to provide nation-wide data on the prevalence and management of genitourinary signs of menopause (GSM) conducted by the Atrophy of the vaGina in womAn in postT-menopause in ItAly (AGATA) group. Nine hundred thirteen females, 59.3 ± 7.4 years old asking for a routine gynaecological examination were recruited. Diagnosis of GSM was based on patient sensation of vaginal dryness, any objective sign of vuvular vaginal atrophy and a pH > 5. 722/913 (79.1%) women were diagnosed with GSM with a prevalence ranging from 64.7% to 84.2%, starting from 1 to 6 years after menopause. Recent vaginal infection was more likely in women with GSM (OR 2.48, 95% CI: 1.33-4.62; p = 0.0041).

Symptoms reported by women with GSM were vaginal dryness (100%), dyspareunia (77.6%), burning (56.9%), itching (56.6%) and dysuria (36.1%). Signs detected by gynaecologists were mucosal dryness (99%), thinning of vaginal rugae (92.1%), pallor of the mucosa (90.7%), mucosal fragility (71.9%) and petechiae (46.7%). Only 274 (30%) of women had had a previous diagnosis of VVA/GSM. These were treated either with no therapy (9.8%), systemic hormone (9.2%), local hormone (44.5%) or local non-hormonal (36.5%) therapy, and at the time of investigation 266 of them (97.1%) still had the disorder.

GSM is a common, under-diagnosed and under-treated disorder. Measures to improve its early detection and its appropriate management are needed.


**RATIONALE:** A PHE reference guide, suggesting that, PHE UTI diagnostic flowchart for women (under 65 years) with suspected UTI suggests that 2 or 3 of the key diagnostic symptoms/signs indicate that a UTI is likely. The symptoms/signs to look out for are: dysuria (burning pain when passing urine), new nocturia (passing urine more often at night), urine cloudy to the naked eye.


**RATIONALE:** A randomised controlled trial across 42 German general practices, aiming to determine if treatment of symptoms of uncomplicated UTI with ibuprofen can reduce the rate of antibiotic prescriptions without a significant increase in symptoms, recurrences, or complications. 494 women aged...
between 18 and 65 with typical symptoms of uncomplicated UTI were included and randomly assigned to one of two treatment arms: a single dose of fosfomycin 3g for three days (n=246), or ibuprofen 3 x 400mg for three days (n=248). In both groups, additional antibiotic treatment was subsequently prescribed as necessary for persistent, worsening, or recurrent symptoms. Results indicated that, out of the 248 women in the ibuprofen group, two thirds treated symptomatically recovered without any antibiotics. Recurrent urinary tract infections were more common in the fosfomycin group. This trial also indicated that mild to moderate urinary symptoms given an anti-inflammatory agent and not treated with empirical therapy can last for a mean average of 5.6 days. The authors conclude that, although they cannot generally recommend ibuprofen as first-line treatment for uncomplicated UTI in women, the treatment option can be discussed with women with mild to moderate symptoms in a shared decision making approach, or within a strategy of delayed prescribing.


RATIONALE: A prospective, multicentre, randomised double-blind and placebo controlled trial, including 1,143 women over 18 consulting for symptoms suggestive of uncomplicated lower UTI. This trial described natural course as the spontaneous eradication of both symptoms and bacteriuria. Spontaneous cure rate of symptoms was recorded at 28% after seven days, and 37% had neither symptoms nor bacteriuria by five to seven weeks. At seven days, however, the majority of uropathogens responsible for uncomplicated UTIs were starting to be eradicated, including E. coli (170 isolates).


RATIONALE: A prospective cohort study, investigating how many women presenting with UTI symptoms were willing to delay antibiotic treatment when asked by their general practitioner. 137 of 176 women were asked by their GP to delay antibiotic treatment, and 37% (51/137) were willing to delay. After one week, 55% (28/51) of delaying women had not used antibiotics, with 71% (20/28) reporting clinical improvement of cure, and none of the participating women developing pyelonephritis. This study supports the findings of two earlier studies, suggesting that women with UTIs prefer not to take antibiotics, and are open to alternative management approaches, including the delayed use of antibiotics.


RATIONALE: A randomised controlled trial of 309 women, to assess five UTI management strategies: empirical antibiotics; empirical delayed (by 48 hours) antibiotics; targeted antibiotics based on a symptom score, a dipstick result, or a positive midstream urine analysis. All participants were also given written information on symptom management specific to their management approach. Patients had 3.5 days of moderately bad symptoms if they took antibiotics immediately, and there were no significant differences in duration or severity of symptoms between the five groups. Patients who waited at least 48 hours to start taking antibiotics reconsulted less (HR 0.57; CI 0.36 to 0.89; p=0.014), but on average had symptoms for 37% longer than those taking immediate antibiotics. The authors conclude that antibiotics targeted with dipstick tests and delayed prescriptions as back-up, or empirical delayed prescriptions, help to reduce antibiotic use.

**RATIONALE:** A collation of six studies, aiming to estimate clinical and dipstick predictors of infection and develop and test clinical scores, and to compare management using clinical and dipstick scores with commonly used alternative strategies. The results showed that, in women with uncomplicated UTI, the negative predictive value when nitrite, leukocytes, and blood are all negative was 76%. The positive predictive value for having nitrite and either blood or leukocytes was 92%. Moderate to severe UTI is defined as having a higher symptom score of two or more of: urine cloudiness; smell; nocturia; dysuria. Results also suggested that women suffer 3.5 days of moderately bad symptoms with immediate antibiotics, and 4.8 days if taking antibiotics is delayed for 48 hours. The authors conclude that, to achieve good symptom control and reduce antibiotic use, clinicians should either offer a 48-hour delayed antibiotic prescription to be used at the patient’s discretion, or target antibiotic treatment by dipsticks (positive nitrite or positive leukocytes and blood) with the offer of a delayed prescription if dipstick results are negative. Those treated with empirical therapy should, however, seek further advice if their symptoms do not start to improve within 48 hours.


**RATIONALE:** A systematic review and meta-analysis of 21 studies, involving 6,016 participants. The authors found that trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX) was as effective as fluoroquinolones in achieving short-term (RR 1.0; 95% CI 0.97 to 1.03) and long-term (RR 0.99; 95% CI 0.94 to 1.05) symptomatic cure. Beta-lactam drugs were as effective as TMP-SMX for short-term (RR 0.95; 95% CI 0.81 to 1.12) and long-term (RR 1.06; 95% CI 0.93 to 1.21) symptomatic cure. Short-term cure for nitrofurantoin was similar to that of TMP-SMX (RR 0.99; 95% CI 0.95 to 1.04), as was long-term symptomatic cure (RR 1.01; 95% CI 0.94 to 1.09). Fluoroquinolones were more effective than beta-lactams for short-term bacteriological cure (RR 1.22; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.31). The authors conclude that no differences were observed between the classes of antimicrobials included in this review for the symptomatic cure of uncomplicated UTI. Fluoroquinolones proved more effective than beta-lactams for the short-term bacteriological outcome, with little clinical significance, but should be reserved for the treatment of pyelonephritis. Individualised treatment should take into consideration the predictable susceptibility of urinary pathogens in local areas, possible adverse events, resistance development, and patient preference.


**RATIONALE:** A systematic review and meta-analysis of five double-blind randomised controlled trials, assessing the benefits of antibiotics versus placebo in 1,407 patients. Antibiotics included were pivmecillinam, nitrofurantoin, cefixime, co-trimoxazole, and amoxicillin. The results of the meta-analysis provided evidence that clinical success was significantly more likely in women treated with antibiotics versus those treated with placebo (OR 4.81; 95% CI 2.51 to 9.21; four RCTs, n=1,062). Antibiotics were also superior to placebo, regarding cure (OR 4.67; 95% CI 2.34 to 9.35; four RCTs, n=1,062); microbiological eradication at the end of treatment (OR 10.67; 95% CI 2.96 to 38.43; three RCTs, n=967); microbiological eradication after the end of treatment (OR 5.38; 95% CI 1.63 to 17.77; three RCTs, n=738); microbiological reinfection or relapse (OR 0.27; 95% CI 0.13 to 0.55; five RCTs, n=843). Adverse events were more likely to occur in antibiotic-treated patients versus placebo-treated patients (OR 1.64; 95% CI 1.10 to 2.44; four RCTs, n=1,068).
No difference was found between the compared treatment arms regarding study withdrawal from adverse events, the development of pyelonephritis, or the emergence of resistance.


**RATIONALE:** A review of the literature, suggesting that bacteriological cure rates with pivmecillinam are consistently more than 85%, therefore suggesting that a three day course is appropriate for the treatment of uncomplicated urinary tract infections. Findings from a range of studies have indicated that: at early post-therapy follow-up, bacteriological cure rate for pivmecillinam is 75%; after four days, there is a satisfactory clinical response in 95% of subjects; after 11 days, 82% of subjects receiving pivmecillinam had achieved clinical cure (95% CI 0.9% to 10.3%). Another clinical trial compared pivmecillinam 200mg TDS for second days, and 400mg BD for three days, compared with placebo. Of the 69% bacteriologically evaluable patients, eight to ten days after therapy, cure rates were 85%, 90%, 79%, and 28%, respectively. This suggests that both seven day regimens were better than the three day regimen (p=0.002), but the seven day TDS regimen showed only a trend to improved outcome (p=0.068). The authors conclude that a seven day treatment regimen gives better outcomes than a three day course, but clinical response may be better than bacteriological response on different types of UTI. The authors also state that the shorter three day course of pivmecillinam would be effective empirical therapy for the majority of women with uncomplicated UTI, particularly premenopausal women.


**RATIONALE:** PHE decided to not include Ibuprofen alone without a back-up antibiotic prescription as a recommended self-care treatment for older adults with UTI, due to the increased risk of pyelonephritis in this study with NSAID. However, there may be a place for the use of NSAIDs for pain relief with antibiotics but more studies are needed to establish any risks from this. This study is a Randomised, double blind, non-inferiority trial in 17 general practices in Switzerland. 253 women with uncomplicated lower UTI were randomly assigned 1:1 to symptomatic treatment with the NSAID diclofenac (n=133) or antibiotic treatment with norfloxacin (n=120). The primary outcome was resolution of symptoms at day 3 (72 hours after randomisation and 12 hours after intake of the last study drug). The pre-specified principal secondary outcome was the use of any antibiotic (including norfloxacin and fosfomycin as trial drugs) up to day 30. Analysis was by intention to treat. Six women in the diclofenac group (5%) but none in the norfloxacin group received a clinical diagnosis of pyelonephritis (P=0.03). Diclofenac is inferior to norfloxacin for symptom relief of UTI and is likely to be associated with an increased risk of pyelonephritis, even though it reduces antibiotic use in women with uncomplicated lower UTI. This study did not offer a back-up / delayed antibiotic with the NSAID or pain relief; giving a back-up antibiotic prescription, allows patients to have control of their symptoms.


**RATIONALE:** A NICE guideline, stating that urinary tract infections are caused by the presence and multiplication of micro-organisms in the urinary tract. This guideline states that urinary tract infections can result in several clinical syndromes, including acute and chronic pyelonephritis (infection of the kidney and renal pelvis), cystitis (infection of the bladder), urethritis (infection of the urethra), epididymitis (infection of the epididymis), and prostatitis (infection of the prostate gland). A urinary tract infection is defined by a combination of clinical features and the presence of bacteria in the urine.

RATIONALE: An SAPG guideline, providing a thorough overview of the management of recurrent urinary tract infections. This guideline provides advice about simple measures to limit recurrent UTI, including: better hydration; urge initiated voiding and postcoital voiding; cranberry products; stand-by antibiotics; intra-vaginal or oral oestrogens for post-menopausal women. This guideline also stresses the importance of confirming UTI diagnoses, and investigating underlying causes if simple measures are not effective.


RATIONALE: An ARHAI report, noting that mandatory surveillance over the past ten years has demonstrated a sustained increase in E. coli bacteraemia, that is unexplained by improved diagnosis. The analysis demonstrates that only a small proportion of infections are related to urinary catheterisation. Other risk factors, such as repeated urinary tract infections treated by sub-optimal antibiotic prescribing, and inadequate hydration, have a significant impact. The surveillance report shows that E. coli bacteraemia peaks in the summer months, which may also be due to poor urine output associated with dehydration. The report recommends that: all organisations providing care to patients with indwelling urinary catheters should ensure that the recommendations of EPIC 3 (short-term catheters) and NICE (long-term catheters) are being implemented, and provide evidence of compliance; hydration status must be a priority for those at risk of dehydration, particularly those in hospitals and long-term care facilities; treatment of UTI should be based on local antibiotic resistance patterns, and patients diagnosed with a UTI (especially those with a history of repeated infections) should be subject to a safety-netting procedure to ensure that treatment has been effective.


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RATIONALE: A systematic review and meta-analysis of ten randomised controlled trials and 1,494 participants. Administration of cranberry-containing products differed significantly in form, daily dosage, proanthocyanidins content, and dosing frequency. Cranberry-containing products seemed to be more effective in women with recurrent UTIs (RR 0.53; 95% CI 0.33 to 0.83; I²=0%); female populations (RR 0.49; 95% CI 0.34 to 0.73; I²=34%); children (RR 0.33; 95% CI 0.16 to 0.69; I²=0%); cranberry juice users (RR 0.47; 95% CI 0.30 to 0.72; I²=2%); people using cranberry-containing products more than twice daily (RR 0.58; 95% CI 0.40 to 0.84; I²=18%). The authors conclude that cranberry-containing products are associated with a protective effect against UTI. However, the results should be interpreted in the context of substantial heterogeneity across trials.

**RATIONALE:** A systematic review of 24 studies and 4,473 participants, comparing cranberry products with control or alternative treatments. There was a small trend towards fewer UTIs in people taking cranberry products, compared to placebo or no treatment, but this was not a significant finding. Many participants stopped drinking the juice, suggesting it may not be an acceptable intervention. In the long-term, cranberry products were ineffective, possibly due to the lack of potency of the active ingredient. Four of the five studies in women with recurrent UTI (n=594), which included a placebo group, provided data that could be combined in a meta-analysis. Results demonstrated a small, non-significant reduction in the risk of repeat symptomatic UTI with cranberry treatment, compared to placebo or no treatment (RR 0.74; 95% CI 0.42 to 1.31). Two studies in women with recurrent UTI, and one study in children, compared cranberry capsules or syrup with antibiotic prophylaxis. Meta-analysis of the two studies in women showed that cranberry products, compared to antibiotics, were equally as effective in reducing the risk of repeat UTI (RR 1.31; 95% CI 0.85 to 2.02). The study in children also showed that the cranberry products, compared to antibiotics, were equally as effective in reducing the risk of repeat symptomatic UTI (RR 0.69; 95% CI 0.32 to 1.51).


**RATIONALE:** A CKS guideline, providing advice for six different scenarios of uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women. For recurrent UTI, this guideline states that cranberry products and urine alkalinising agents should not be recommended, as there is currently no good evidence to support their use. This guideline also states that women should seek medical attention if they develop fever, loin pain, or do not respond to treatment.


**RATIONALE:** A NICE guideline, stating that people with sepsis may have non-specific, non-localised presentations, such as feeling generally unwell without a high temperature of over 38°C. This guideline presents a risk stratification tool for adults, children and young people aged 12 years and over with suspected sepsis. Where high temperature is recognised as a cause for concern, this guideline also lists a tympanic temperature of less than 36°C as a moderate to high risk criteria for sepsis.


**RATIONALE:** A UK Sepsis Trust website, stating that if someone has early signs of a flu-like illness, chest infection, diarrhoea and vomiting, or an inability to eat and drink, together with one of the symptoms of sepsis, immediate medical advice should be sought. This website defines the symptoms of sepsis as: slurred speech; extreme shivering or muscle pain; passing no urine (in a day); severe breathlessness; skin mottled or discoloured.

RATIONALE: A UK Sepsis Trust guideline, stating that sepsis is caused by the way the body responds to an infection, which may have started anywhere in the body. This guideline also outlines the symptoms of sepsis as: a drop in blood pressure; fast heart beat; breathlessness; mottled skin; lack of urination; difficulty breathing; confusion and disorientation.


RATIONALE: A retrospective study, aiming to determine the association of UTI with genital hygiene practices and sexual activity in pregnant women. 200 pregnant women attending prenatal clinics in Saudi Arabia between January 2011 and June 2014 were included. 80 women who had positive urine cultures were compared with the remaining 120 healthy women. Results indicated that *E. coli* was the infecting organism in 83% of cases. Factors associated with UTI included sexual intercourse more than three times a week (OR=5.62); recent UTI (OR=3.27); not washing genitals pre-coitus (OR=2.16); not washing genitals post-coitus (OR=8.62); wiping genitals from back to front (OR=2.96). The authors state that genital hygiene practices such as frequency of coitus, urinating after coitus, washing genitals pre- and post-coitus, taking baths, frequent replacing of underwear, and wiping genitals from front to back were associated with a reduced frequency of UTIs. Women who usually urinated within 15 minutes of intercourse also had a lower likelihood of developing a UTI than women who did not urinate after intercourse. The authors conclude that urinary tract infection in these women were primarily caused by bacteria from the stool (*E. coli*), and that hygiene habits and sexual behaviour may play a role in the occurrence of UTIs.


RATIONALE: In 1 RCT Kranjcec et al 2014 (N=308) compared D-mannose (2gms in 200mls per day) with antibiotic prophylaxis (nitrofurantoin 50mg a day) and with no treatment. Patients in the D-mannose group and the antibiotic prophylaxis group had a significantly lower risk of recurrent UTI episodes during therapy compared to patients in the no treatment group (RR 0.239 and 0.335, P<.0001). Patients in the D-mannose group had a significantly lower risk of side effects compared to patients in Nitrofurantoin group (RR 0.276, P<.0001), but the clinical importance of this finding is low because Nitrofurantoin was well tolerated. D-mannose works by sticking to E.coli lectin on their fimbria preventing adhesion to the bladder, so promoting an immune response. This is high quality evidence and there is no reason why this should not give similar results in older women although further studies will be needed in both age groups to confirm these excellent results. Health professionals may want to consider recommending D-mannose as an alternative preventative treatment.


RATIONALE: A randomised controlled trial, including 108 postmenopausal women, aiming to detect a difference in time until the first recurrence of a urinary tract infection during treatment with an estradiol-releasing silicone vaginal ring, versus no oestrogen treatment. 53 women were randomly assigned to the Estring group, and 55 were assigned to the control group. Results indicated that approximately 45% of the women with the vaginal ring remained free of disease, in comparison to approximately 20% in the control group (p=.008). Estring lowered vaginal pH, and the time to first recurrence was effectively prolonged by Estring treatment. The authors conclude that the use of vaginal oestrogen can be considered for the prevention of recurrent UTI in postmenopausal women.

RATIONALE: A review article, stating that serious infections caused by bacteria that have become resistant to commonly used antibiotics have become a major global healthcare problem in the 21st century. This review states that the single largest cause of antibiotic resistance is the indiscriminate and inappropriate use of antibiotics in outpatient clinics, hospitalised patients, and in the food industry. The authors state that antibiotics should only be taken on advice from a healthcare professional for a bacterial infection that shows susceptibility to that particular antibiotic. This review also states that new mechanisms of resistance have resulted in the simultaneous development of resistance to several antibiotic classes, creating very dangerous multidrug-resistant bacterial strains, also known as ‘super-bugs’. The potential negative consequences of this are that they put society at risk for the spread of potentially serious multi-drug resistant bacterial infections.


RATIONALE: A systematic review and meta-analysis, aiming to investigate subsequent antibiotic resistance in individuals prescribed antibiotics in primary care. 24 studies were included, 22 of which involved patients with symptomatic infection, and two of which involved healthy volunteers. In five studies of urinary tract bacteria (14,348 participants), the pooled odds ratio for resistance was 2.5 (95% CI 2.1 to 2.9) within two months of antibiotic treatment, and 1.33 (95% CI 1.2 to 1.5) within 12 months. Studies reporting the quantity of antibiotic prescribed found that longer duration and multiple courses were associated with higher rates of resistance. The authors conclude that individuals prescribed an antibiotic in primary care for a urinary infection develop bacterial resistance to that antibiotic. The effect is greatest in the month immediately following treatment, but may persist for up to 12 months. This effect not only increases the population carriage of organisms resistant to first line antibiotics, but also creates the conditions for increased use of second-line antibiotics in the community.


RATIONALE: A retrospective study, aiming to explore the views of women with urinary tract infections on the acceptability of different strategies for managing the infection, including delayed use of antibiotics, and the cause of infection. 21 women presenting to general practices across Southern England were included. Results indicated that women preferred not to take antibiotics, and were open to alternative management approaches, due to wanting to avoid the side-effects of antibiotic therapy. Most of the participants with experience of antibiotic use had developed thrush, skin rash, and gastrointestinal side-effects as a consequence, and this mediated their desire for antibiotic medication. The authors conclude that if women are asked to delay taking antibiotics, the clinician must address the particular worries that women might have, and explain the rationale for not using antibiotics immediately.

RATIONALE: A retrospective study, in which all bacteria isolated from urine samples with microbiological confirmation of a urinary tract infection in a Spanish reference hospital over a seven year period were analysed. A total of 31,758 uropathogens were isolated, with *Escherichia coli* accounting for the majority of these (55.2%). The authors state that the high incidence of UTIs call for empiric antibiotic treatment in most cases. However, providing rational empiric treatment requires identifying the microorganisms involved and establishing their antibiotic susceptibility patterns, especially with *E. coli*. The authors conclude that nitrofurantoin and fosfomycin can be first-choice antibiotics for the treatment of uncomplicated community-acquired cystitis. However, previous use of these antibiotics can lead to increased resistance, so surveillance studies are required to detect resistance, given that an increase in uropathogen resistance rates may contraindicate its future use.