## 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key signs/symptoms:</th>
<th>The outcome</th>
<th>Recommended care</th>
<th>Types of urinary tract infection (UTI)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dysuria:</strong> Burning pain when passing urine (wee)</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td><strong>New nocturia:</strong> Needing to pass urine in the night</td>
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<td><strong>Cloudy urine:</strong> Visible cloudy colour when passing urine</td>
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<td><strong>Other severe signs/symptoms:</strong></td>
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<td>Frequency: Passing urine more often than usual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urgency: Feeling the need to pass urine immediately</td>
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<td>Haematuria: Blood in your urine</td>
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<td>Suprapubic pain: Pain in your lower tummy</td>
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<td><strong>Other things to consider:</strong></td>
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<td>Recent sexual history</td>
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<td>• Inflammation due to sexual activity can be similar to the symptoms of a UTI</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can have symptoms similar to those of a UTI</td>
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<td><strong>Changes during menopause</strong></td>
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<td>• Some changes during the menopause can have symptoms similar to those of a UTI</td>
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</table>

### 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
- There is currently no evidence to support taking cranberry products or cystitis sachets to improve your symptoms
- Consider the risk factors in the 'Options to help prevent UTI' column to reduce future UTIs

### When should you get help?

Contact your GP practice or contact NHS

### Options to help prevent a UTI

The following symptoms are possible signs of serious infection and should be assessed urgently

Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are

1. You have shivering, chills and muscle pain
2. You feel confused, or are very drowsy
3. You have not passed urine all day
4. You are vomiting
5. You see blood in your urine
6. Your temperature is above 38°C or less than 36°C
7. You have kidney pain in your back just under the ribs
8. Your symptoms get worse
9. Your symptoms are not starting to improve within 48 hours of taking antibiotics

It may help you to consider these risk factors:

Stop bacteria spreading from your bowel into your bladder. Wipe from front (vagina) to back (bottom) after using the toilet.

Avoid waiting to pass urine. Pass urine as soon as you need a wee.

Go for a **wee after having sex** to flush out any bacteria that may be near the opening to the urethra.

**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, the following may help

- **Cranberry products and D-mannose**: There is some evidence to say that these work to help prevent recurrent UTI
- **After the menopause**: Topical hormonal treatment may help; for example, vaginal creams.
- Antibiotics at night or after sex may be considered

### Antibiotic resistance

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.