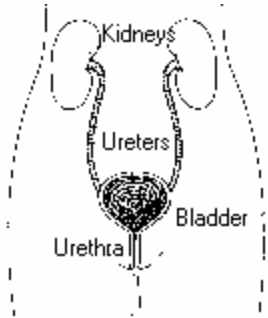


Urinary Tract Infection-Cystitis

Definition and Symptoms

Cystitis is a bacterial infection of the bladder and the urethra, which is the tube that carries the urine from the bladder to the outside of the body.

Symptoms that may be present are: Frequent urination, urinary urgency and/or urinating small amounts, pain and burning with urination, blood in urine, chills, fever, lower abdominal pain, fatigue, and sometimes flank pain (which indicates that infection is spreading up to the kidneys).



Causes and Risk Factors

The cause is bacteria, which normally inhabit the lower intestinal tract and rectum. Women are more susceptible as they have shorter urethras than do men. These bacteria may spread into the urethra and bladder by incomplete wiping, self-contamination after a bowel movement (wiping forward instead of backward), through intercourse or finger manipulation. Holding one's urine too long and insufficient water intake also contribute.

How Is It Diagnosed?

Cystitis can be diagnosed by a microscopic examination of a urine specimen or by obtaining a urine culture, which identifies the infecting bacteria. A sensitivity test, which identifies the appropriate antibiotic to take, may also be ordered. Testing for STD's should also be done if exposure has been possible. You should discuss this with your healthcare physician/provider.

If you think you may have an infection, ask the Health Service for a container to use for a first morning urine collection. If you can't wait overnight, come in after holding your urination for 4 hours, if possible.

Treatment

The most common treatment is a course of prescription antibiotic pills - be sure to take all of them as directed. In addition, adequate fluids are essential. If re-infection or a relapse occurs (the symptoms return or the follow-up culture shows infection), further examination and treatment are needed. Avoid coffee, tea, soda, and alcohol - drink lots of water while on medication.

Complications

Infection can ascend from the bladder to kidneys, causing flank (side) or back pain, sometimes with nausea and/or fever. Kidney infections need prompt medical attention -- they can be life threatening.

Prevention

Some preventive measures include:

- ◆ Cleanliness. After a bowel movement wipe front to back.
- ◆ Drink 6-8 glasses of water and other fluids daily.
- ◆ Empty your bladder soon after feeling the urge to go. Urinate before and after sexual intercourse.
- ◆ Have sexual partners get evaluated and treated; this can sometimes prevent recurrent infections.
- ◆ Avoid bubble baths, deodorized tampons, and perfumed colored toilet paper, as well as soda and spices, which are bladder irritants.
- ◆ Diaphragm and contraceptive sponge users should follow good hygiene. Never leave the device in your vagina longer than 12 hours. Have your diaphragm size checked if infections reoccur.
- ◆ Take vitamin C (500 mg per day) or drink cranberry juice, which may help by acidifying the urine.

For More Information

<http://www.mayohealth.org/mayo/9605/htm/uti.htm>

<http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ih/IH/WSIHW000/331/10925.html>

<http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ih/IH/WSIHW000/331/10929.html>

