

Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) can occur when bacteria enters into the urinary system. UTIs are far more common in women due to the close proximity of the urethra, vagina and anus, and therefore there is easier access for detrimental bacteria to pass from the anus and vagina into the urinary tract. Lower UTIs involve the urethra and bladder and if left unchecked can progress to the upper region of the urinary system, the ureters and kidneys. Reoccurring kidney infections can be damaging to the kidneys.

Common symptoms of UTIs

- Frequent urination
- Strong urgency to urinate
- Burning pain on urination
- Lower abdominal or back pain
- Dark, strong smelling urine
- Cloudy urine
- Sometimes fever or the possibility of blood in the urine

Preventative Measures for UTIs

The old saying, "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure", is so true with most ailments, including urinary tract infections.

Ensure healthy colonies of micro flora are maintained. The use of antibiotics that are so often prescribed to treat UTIs can actually be a causative factor in reoccurring infections. The following can be done to assist beneficial microbial populations in the body:

- Take a good probiotic formula, particularly after antibiotics have been used
- Include fermented foods in the diet such as unsweetened probiotic yoghurt, kefir, tempeh, sauerkraut and miso

It is also important to maintain a health immunity in order to ward off infection:

- Avoid stress - stress lowers your immunity
- Include immune enhancers in the diet such as garlic and foods rich in vitamin C, vitamin A, and zinc
- Get regular moderate exercise

Parsley is very good for kidney health and is also a good source of vitamin C, A, E and B vitamins, as well as numerous minerals, including zinc.

Drink plenty of water in between meals to help cleanse the urinary system.

It may pay to get checked for possible allergies as these can sometimes be an underlying factor in reoccurring urinary tract infections.

Avoid toxic lubricants, flavoured or scented condoms, scented toilet paper and soaps and

bubble baths that contain chemicals.

Take care not to wipe faecal matter towards the urethral opening.

Urinate after intercourse if possible to help cleanse the urethra.

Wear cotton underwear and avoid wearing g-strings.

Getting on top of a current UTI

- Drink unsweetened cranberry or blueberry juice every day
- Drink plenty of water to help flush the urinary tract out
- Take a 'vitamin C with bioflavonoids' supplement
- Drink echinacea, bearberry, marshmallow, dandelion, nettle, and rosehip herb teas
- Take a probiotic supplement
- Douch with an unsweetened probiotic yoghurt to which probiotic powder can also be added
- Avoid sugar and foods that contain sugar. Sugar lowers your immunity
- Take a homeobotanical formula, made by your naturopath, to specifically address your UTI
- Also follow all recommendations under **Preventative Measures for UTIs**

If an urinary tract infection does not clear in a couple of days or symptoms get worse it is advisable to seek medical assistance to avoid potential damage to the kidneys.

Naturopathic Clinic