

Managing your Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) – Community Pharmacy Patient Information sheet

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) are particularly common in women and are usually more of a nuisance than a cause for serious concern. Your pharmacist should be able to diagnose a UTI by asking about your symptoms.

Mild UTIs will often get better by themselves within a few days.

The main symptoms of a mild UTI include:

- pain, burning or stinging when you pass urine
- needing to pass urine more often and urgently than normal
- urine that's dark, cloudy or strong smelling
- pain low down in your tummy

When symptoms are mild you will be advised to try the self-help measures listed below:

- take paracetamol
- drink plenty of water
- hold a hot water bottle on your tummy or between your thighs
- avoid having sex

Some people find it helpful to try over-the-counter products that reduce the acidity of their urine (such as sodium bicarbonate or potassium citrate). **If your symptoms do not improve within 2 days or if they get worse you must seek further advice.**

If your symptoms are more severe your pharmacist, after asking you some important questions, may feel that it is appropriate to provide you with an antibiotic. The pharmacist will check

- Your age
- Whether you may be pregnant
- What medicines you are taking
- If you have any allergies to any medicines
- If you have any medical conditions
- What symptoms you are experiencing
- Your past history of urinary tract infections

If your pharmacist decides that you are suitable for treatment without being referred to a doctor you may be provided with antibiotic tablets. You may need to provide written consent to allow the pharmacist to let your GP know that you have been provided with treatment.

You **must** contact your GP or NHS 24 (111 free number) if your symptoms worsen while taking the tablets or if you have not completely recovered after 3 days.

In some cases the pharmacist will not be able to treat you and will refer you immediately to your GP or to the local Out of Hours service.

If you get UTIs frequently, there are some things you could try to prevent this from happening;

- not using perfumed bubble bath, soap, feminine deodorants or talcum powder around personal areas
- having a shower, rather than a bath
- going to the toilet as soon as you feel the need to pass urine and always emptying your bladder fully
- drinking plenty of water
- always wiping your bottom from front to back when you go to the toilet
- emptying your bladder as soon as possible after having sex
- wearing underwear made from cotton rather than synthetic material such as nylon, and not wearing tight jeans and trousers

Drinking cranberry juice or taking cranberry capsules may also prevent the recurrence of UTIs. Cranberry capsules may be easier to take than juice and high strength capsules may be more effective. (There is no evidence to support the effectiveness of cranberry products for treating symptoms of a UTI)

Please note – If you take *warfarin* you should avoid cranberry juice and capsules.

For further information visit NHS Inform:

<http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/health-library/articles/u/urinary-tract-infection-adult>