

Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections

What are recurrent urinary tract infections?

A urinary tract infection occurs when bacteria move into the bladder and grow. This can cause painful or frequent urination, blood in the urine, or problems with emptying the bladder. People who get three or more of these infections in a year, or two in six months, have recurrent urinary tract infections.

What should I do if I think I have an infection?

Talk to your doctor if you have symptoms of a urinary tract infection for the first time. He or she will test your urine to make sure it's an infection. If you've had a urinary tract infection before, you might not need to be tested again. Call your doctor right away if you have a fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, back pain, or vaginal discharge, or if you recently had urinary tract surgery.

How are they treated?

Your doctor will usually prescribe a pill that you take for three to five days. If you have recurrent urinary tract infections and your symptoms are always the same, your doctor might give you a prescription that you can keep at home and start

taking when you first notice symptoms. See your doctor if your symptoms last longer than two days after you start taking the medicine.

How can I prevent them?

- Urinate before and after sex.
- Do not use spermicides.
- If you have not undergone menopause, try taking over-the-counter cranberry pills.
- If you have undergone menopause, talk to your doctor about using prescription vaginal estrogen cream.
- Talk to your doctor about antibiotics to prevent urinary tract infections. Some people benefit from taking a pill each time they have sex. Others might need to take one every day.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP Patient Information Resource

<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/urinary-tract-infections.html>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/urinary-tract-infection/basics/prevention/con-20037892>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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