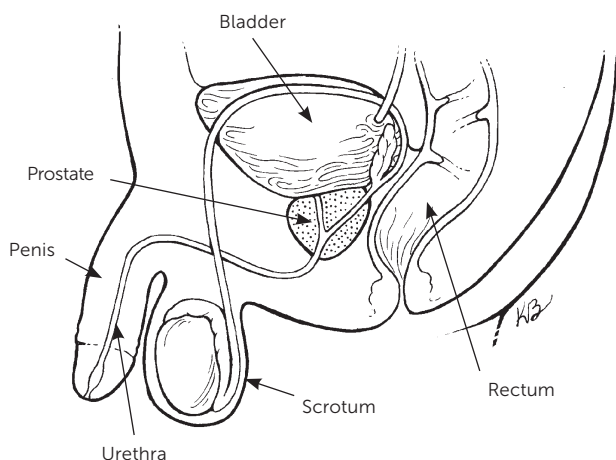


Urethritis

What is urethritis?

Urethritis (YOO-ree-THRI-tus) is an inflammation of the urethra, which is the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the penis, then out of the body (*see drawing*).



Who gets it?

Urethritis is most common in people 15 to 35 years of age. It can be caused by sexually transmitted infections (STIs, for short). It can also be caused by irritation. Sometimes the cause can't be found.

How do I know if I have it?

You may have pain while you urinate or have discharge from your penis. The end of your penis may itch or swell. Talk to your doctor if you have these symptoms. They will examine you and examine any discharge from your penis. You will probably have to give a urine sample.

How is it treated?

Urethritis is usually treated with antibiotics. It's important to take antibiotics the way they're prescribed. You should finish the entire course, even if you start feeling better. This will usually cure your symptoms.

Your doctor may wait until your test results are back before prescribing antibiotics. If you have an STI, you may need to have blood tests for other infections. Your doctor will tell you how to contact your sex partners so they can be treated.

What can I expect?

- Don't have sex for one week after starting antibiotics.
- Don't have sex until your sex partner(s) have been treated.

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Urethritis *(continued)*

- Don't have sex until your symptoms have gone away.
- Avoid certain foods and drinks that can make antibiotics not work as well, like dairy products and alcohol.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist about other medicines or vitamins you take. You may need to stop taking these until you finish your antibiotics.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Tell your doctor if you don't feel better within a week after finishing your antibiotics.
- If you do not have an infection, you may need to avoid other things that can irritate the urethra, such as:
 - Spicy foods
 - Perfumed soaps, body washes, lotions, or lubricants
 - Vigorous or frequent masturbation or sex

How can I prevent urethritis?

Practice safer sex by:

- Using condoms correctly every time you have sex
- Not exchanging money or drugs for sex
- Not having sex after drinking alcohol or taking drugs
- Limiting your number of sex partners
- Talking with your partner(s) about STIs and safer sex practices before having sex
- Talk to your doctor about how often you should be screened for STIs, even if you don't have symptoms.

May 2021