



Children's Health

Urinary Tract Infections

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THEM

Urinary tract infections (UTIs), also referred to as bladder infections, occur when bacteria enters the urethra and spreads upward to the bladder. In the first few months of life, urinary tract infections affect males and females equally. As children grow older, females become more prone to these infections because their urethra is shorter, which makes it easier for bacteria to enter the tract.

ARE UTIs DANGEROUS?

The infections themselves are not dangerous if treated correctly with antibiotics. Left untreated, UTIs can lead to a blocked ureter and serious bladder and kidney infections.

DIAGNOSING BLADDER INFECTIONS

A urine test will confirm the presence of an infection. In a newborn, a specimen will be taken by inserting a catheter into the urethra, collecting urine in a bag or, rarely, by inserting a needle into the bladder. Older children can collect a sample when they urinate. Sometimes a blood test may also be performed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Make sure your child drinks plenty of liquids. If you're breast-feeding, you may need to offer extra bottles of water.
- Change your child's diapers frequently, especially after bowel movements.
- Keep the genital area clean.
- Encourage older children to empty their bladders completely and frequently.
- If you have a female child, instruct her to wipe from front to back after urinating.

SYMPTOMS OF UTIs IN INFANTS

fever
irritability
decreased appetite and weight loss
lethargy
diarrhea and vomiting
crying during urination

SYMPTOMS OF UTIs IN OLDER CHILDREN

pain or a burning sensation during urination
increased frequency of urination
pain in the lower abdomen
bloody, cloudy or foul-smelling urine
accidentally wetting themselves
