
Prevention

Prevention is the key to controlling both the onset of cystitis and its severity.

- Urinate frequently.
- Always drink plenty of fluids to flush out the bladder and keep the urine dilute. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, spices, and carbonated drinks.
- Keep the vaginal and anal area clean. Wipe front to back. Use mild soap and rinse well. Avoid using perfumed products, deodorant soaps, chemicals and/or bubble baths. Wear cotton underwear only and avoid tight fitted clothing.
- Practice good hygiene around sexual activity. Use adequate lubrication during intercourse and always urinate before and after sexual activity. This helps wash out any bacteria from the urethra.



Mission Statement

The Pat Walker Health Center, University Health Services provides professional and comprehensive medical care, mental health care, health education, and health promotion for a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. We, the University Health Services Staff of the Pat Walker Health Center, have a commitment to physical, mental, spiritual, social, and emotional health, the highest standards of quality, and appreciation of the value of each individual. Through these endeavors we support the educational mission of the University of Arkansas and the growth of each individual.

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Urinary Tract Infection (Cystitis)



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What is Cystitis?

For most women, cystitis is a minor infection of the urinary system curable with antibiotics, but it can be both painful and frightening.

What Are the Symptoms?

- Frequent, urgent need to urinate even when there is little urine in the bladder.
- Burning and pain when urinating.
- Blood in the urine.
- Pain and pressure in the pubic area.

Why Do Women Get Cystitis?

Sexual activity often precipitates cystitis. Intercourse can irritate the urethra and contribute to the transmission of bacteria from the anal area to the bladder. Bacteria also can enter the urethra without preceding sexual activity.



Treatment

- Cystitis must be properly diagnosed. A urinalysis is necessary for proper diagnosis.
- If the urinalysis indicates an infection, you will be given a prescription of antibiotics. **It is important that you take all the pills prescribed for you.** Otherwise, some bacteria may remain and start another infection. If you are experiencing a lot of urinary pain a urinary analgesic, Pyridium, may be prescribed to relieve the burning pain. This medication will turn your urine an orange color.
- You may be asked to return for a repeat urinalysis and/or a urine culture after you finish your medication to make sure the infection is gone.
- If you have recurrent symptoms, a culture may be done to determine which drug will kill the bacteria. This is important if you have frequent infection, because the bacteria may become resistant to some drugs most often prescribed. Be sure to tell your health provider if you have had urinary tract infections before.
- If you continue to suffer from cystitis despite treatment and your best preventative measures, you may have a problem with body structure or a defect in your body's immune system. An examination with an urologist (a physician who specializes in problems of the kidneys and bladder) may be necessary.



What Else Can Cause Recurring Cystitis?

Chlamydia or gonorrhea, both sexually transmissible bacterium, are believed to cause a large percentage of recurring cystitis. Chlamydia and gonorrhea infection may result in typical cystitis type symptoms. The diagnosis of chlamydia and gonorrhea is more difficult and the usual drugs for cystitis are not effective. If cystitis symptoms continue it may become necessary to be tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea.

What Are the Complications?

A kidney infection is the greatest complication of cystitis. The bacteria may travel from the bladder, up the ureters into the kidneys. In addition to the cystitis symptoms you will have fever, pain in the back and sides, nausea, and sometimes vomiting. Kidney infections are very serious, so seek medical attention right away.

