

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Urinary tract infections include: **cystitis** (a bladder infection), and **pyelonephritis** (kidney infection). Both are due to bacterial growth. **Interstitial cystitis** (an inflammation of the membrane of the bladder) does not involve bacterial growth.

PREVENTITIVE MEASURES

- Bathe or wash daily
- Wear cotton underwear and avoid tight fitting clothes
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water daily
- Urination: Empty bladder frequently and completely
Wipe from front to back
Urinate before and after sex
- 5-10 cups of Nettle tea a week to strengthen the kidneys
- Echinacea root can strengthen the immune system
- Avoid coffee, black tea, cocoa, soft drinks, alcohol, sugar, spicy foods
- Avoid bubble bath or bath salts

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Urgent and frequent impulse to urinate, often with little results
- A burning sensation during urination
- A mild aching, cramping or pain in the abdomen over bladder area
- Blood in the urine, urine that appears cloudy or smells strong
- More serious signs: back pain over kidneys, fatigue, chills, nausea, fever

DIAGNOSIS

- Signs and symptoms of a bladder infection can be indications of other things (including kidneys disease or venereal disease).
- Have your midwife perform a Midstream Urinalysis (MSU) to analyze for bacteria content (one MSU is routinely done at around 18 weeks of pregnancy)

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Force fluids, especially water
- Cranberry juice (with no sugar or other sweeteners) daily: half a cup 4 times a day to one cup 10 times a day. Or use Cranapple juice or lemon water.
- Vitamin C: 1000mg up to 3 times a day. Makes the urine acidic so that bacteria will not grow in it.
- Herbs: **Uva Ursi** (Bear Berry) can clear up infections resistant to antibiotics. Do not use for more than 10 days. Or half and half **Yarrow/Uva Ursi** if Uva Ursi alone does not clear it up in 5 days.

ALLOPATHIC REMEDIES

- Oral antibiotics prescribed through your physician. If on antibiotics, increase your intake of yogurt with live acidophilus culture (and no sugar!) or take acidophilus tablets to avoid starting a vaginal candidiasis (yeast) infection.

AFTER THE REMEDIES

- Have another MSU done to ensure that the bacterial counts are back to normal. You want to keep on top of a bladder infection because, rarely, the bacteria travel up to the kidneys causing a serious disease or premature labour.