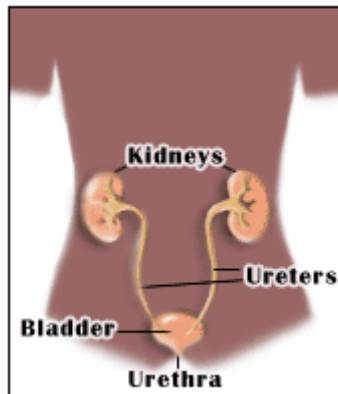


Unit 3 Lesson 4 Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

Read the article about the urinary system and some of the most common infections. Then answer the questions that follow.

What Exactly Is a Urinary Tract?



Your urinary tract is actually a system made up of six main parts: your two kidneys, two ureters (say: **yur**-uh-turz), bladder, and urethra (say: yoo-**ree**-thruh). All day long, the kidneys clean waste products from your blood. The waste becomes urine, which drips into the ureters (long, thin tubes, one connected to each kidney). From there, the urine travels through the ureters down to the bladder.

When it's empty, your bladder is about the same size as an empty balloon. It looks like one, too! Then the bladder slowly fills up with the urine coming from the kidneys. When you have about a cup (237 milliliters) of urine in your bladder, your brain tells you it's time to find a bathroom.

Once you're ready to urinate, you relax a set of muscles at the bottom of your bladder. That lets the urine rush into the urethra, a tube that leads from your bladder out of your body.

Urinary Tract Troubles

Women are more likely than men to get a UTI. That's because their urethras are much shorter than men's urethras. The shorter urethra means bacteria can get up into the bladder more easily and cause an infection there.

(cont.) Urinary Tract Infections

The bacteria that cause UTIs normally live in your intestines. Each time you have a bowel movement, some of these bacteria come out of your body. If they aren't wiped away properly, they stay on your skin. In women, this means they can grow near the opening of the urethra because their urethras are closer to where they wipe. From there, bacteria can get inside the urethra, causing irritation to the urethra. This is called urethritis (say: yur-ih-**thrye**-tus).

It's just a hop, skip, and a jump from the urethra to the bladder. If the bacteria go there, they can cause a bladder infection, which is a type of UTI. You may also hear a bladder infection called cystitis (say: sis-**tye**-tus), which really means an irritation of the bladder.

Sometimes the harmful bacteria keep spreading. From the bladder, they may head into one of the ureters and climb up into a kidney. This type of UTI is called pyelonephritis (say: pye-loh-nih-**frye**-tus), or a kidney infection, and it's serious because it can damage the kidneys and make you very sick.

Signs of a UTI

You may notice signs of a urinary tract infection before anyone else can see there's anything wrong with you. Ask these questions. These are signs and symptoms of a bladder infection.

- Does it hurt or sting when you urinate?
- Do you have to go to the bathroom much more often than normal?
- Can you only urinate a little bit at a time?
- Do you have to get up many times in the night to pee?
- Do you feel pain, pressure, or a tickle in your lower belly?
- Is there blood in your urine?
- Is your urine cloudy?
- Does it smell bad when you urinate?

Excerpt from Familydoctor.org

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1. Which of the following is not part of the urinary tract?

- A. Kidney
- B. Bladder
- C. Ankle
- D. Urethra

2. Why are women more likely to get a UTI than men?

- A. They have a larger bladder.
- B. They have a smaller bladder.
- C. They have a shorter urethra.
- D. They have a longer urethra.

3. Which of the following are signs of a bladder infection?

- A. Pain with urination
- B. Frequent urination
- C. Blood in the urine
- D. All of the above

4. What is the type of UTI that affects the kidneys?

- A. Urethritis
- B. Cystitis
- C. Pyelonephritis
- D. None of the above

5. Where does the bacteria that cause UTI's live?

- A. Bladder
- B. Urethra
- C. Intestine
- D. Kidney