

# BLADDER INFECTION, FEMALE

(Cystitis in Women)



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Inflammation of the urinary tract.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pressure, burning, or stinging during urination.
- Frequent urination, although the amount of urine may be small; increased urge to urinate.
- Sensation of incomplete bladder emptying.
- Pain in the abdomen over the bladder.
- Lower-back pain.
- Blood in the urine; bad-smelling urine.
- Low fever and, possibly, chills.
- Painful sexual intercourse.
- Lack of urinary control (sometimes).
- A need to urinate more often at night.

### CAUSES

The inflammation is a reaction to infection (most commonly), injury, or irritation of the bladder lining. It can be brought on by a number of different factors. Sometimes the cause is unknown.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Infection in other parts of the genitourinary system. Bacteria can reach the bladder from another part of the body through the bloodstream. Bacteria can enter the urinary tract from skin around the genital and anal area.
- Frequent or vigorous sexual activity.
- Pregnancy.
- Poor hygiene.
- Diabetes.
- Certain types of birth control. These can include a diaphragm that fits too-tightly, contraceptive foams or vaginal suppositories that irritate the urethra, or a condom that is not lubricated.
- Urinary tract problems (tumors, calculi, or strictures).
- Urethra (tube from the bladder to the outside) injury.
- Use of a urinary catheter to empty the bladder, such as during childbirth or surgery.
- Incomplete bladder emptying.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Urinate within 15 minutes after intercourse.
- Drink plenty of water every day.
- Get medical care for urinary-tract infections.
- Don't douche, use feminine hygiene sprays, or deodorants. Avoid bubble baths.
- Clean the anal area after bowel movements. Wipe from the front to the rear, rather than rear to front.
- Wear underwear that has a cotton crotch.
- Avoid postponing urination. Be sure to completely empty the bladder with urination.
- In women with frequent recurrence of infection, antibiotics may be prescribed for use before sexual intercourse.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

- Curable in a few days to 2 weeks with treatment.
- Recurrence is common.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Inadequate treatment can lead to chronic bladder infections, kidney infection, and (rarely) kidney failure.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider may do a physical exam. Medical tests will include a urine test.
- Treatment is usually with antibiotic drugs.
- Warm baths may help relieve discomfort.
- Pour a cup of warm water over genital area while urinating. It will help to relieve burning and stinging.

### MEDICATION

- Antibiotics for bacterial infection will be prescribed. Antibiotics may reduce the effectiveness of some birth control pills. If you are using birth control pills, discuss this with your health care provider.
- Urinary analgesics may be prescribed for pain. If phenazopyridine (Pyridium) is prescribed, it will turn the urine color to bright orange.

### ACTIVITY

Avoid sexual intercourse until you have been free of symptoms for 2 weeks to allow inflammation to heal.

### DIET

- Drink plenty of water daily to flush the bladder.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol during treatment.
- Drink cranberry juice to acidify urine. Some antibiotic drugs have increased effectiveness when the urine is more acidic.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of cystitis.
- Blood appears in the urine.
- Discomfort and other symptoms don't improve after you have taken the antibiotics for 48 hours.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.
- Symptoms recur after treatment.

Special notes:

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