

KIDNEY INFECTION, ACUTE

(Pyelonephritis, Acute)

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE

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BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Infection and inflammation of one, or sometimes both, kidneys. The kidneys filter waste material from the blood and produce urine. Kidney infections affect all ages and both sexes, but they are more common in females.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Symptoms often come on suddenly.
- Fever and shaking chills.
- Burning, frequent urination.
- Cloudy urine or blood in the urine.
- Aching (may be severe) in one or both sides of the lower back.
- Pain in the abdomen.
- Fatigue.
- Nausea and vomiting.

CAUSES

Most often, a bacteria called *Escherichia coli*. The infection begins in the bladder (cystitis) and the infected urine moves back up the tubes (ureters) that connect the bladder to the kidneys. This is called reflux.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Sexual activity in women. Bacteria enters the urethra (tube from bladder to outside) and bladder.
- Blockage or abnormality of the urinary system. This can be caused by stones, obstructions, nerve diseases, tumors, or congenital (being born with) deformity.
- Prostatitis (prostate inflammation).
- Catheters, tubes, or certain surgical procedures.
- Diabetes.
- Chronic bladder infection or tumor.
- Spinal-cord injury or tumor.
- Pregnancy.
- Bubble bath use in young girls.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Women and girls should wipe from front to back (not back to front) after going to the bathroom.
- Avoid sitting around in wet clothing (wet swimsuits).
- Urinate within 15 minutes after sexual intercourse.
- Don't hold urine. If you have the urge to void, do so.
- Drink plenty of fluids every day.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

With early diagnosis and treatment, an uncomplicated kidney infection is usually curable in 10 to 14 days.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Chronic kidney infection.
- Scarring of kidneys and permanent kidney damage.
- Blood infection.
- Hypertension (high blood pressure).



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam along with a pelvic exam in females and a rectal exam (for prostate problems) in males. Questions will be asked about your symptoms. Medical tests may include urinalysis, urine culture, and blood studies. Other tests may be done to diagnose kidney stones or obstructions.
- Treatment usually involves antibiotic drugs, or, in some cases surgery or hospital care may be needed.
- Surgery may be needed for an obstruction or kidney stones, or for an abnormality diagnosed in a child.
- Hospital care may be required for severe symptoms or for people with other medical disorders.
- Be sure to see your health care provider for follow-up urine tests to verify that the infection is cured.
- To learn more: National Kidney & Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse, 3 Information Way, Bethesda, MD 20892, (800) 891-5390; website: www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov.

MEDICATIONS

- Oral antibiotics. Take all the antibiotics prescribed, even if symptoms clear up.
- Antibiotics (intravenous or by injection), if oral antibiotics don't cure the infection.
- Take nonprescription drugs such as ibuprofen for pain symptoms.
- Urinary analgesics to relieve pain may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY

Rest in bed until any fever and discomfort are gone. Resume sexual relations when advised by your health care provider.

DIET

No special diet. Drink plenty of fluids each day. Drink cranberry juice or vitamin C to acidify the urine.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of a kidney infection.
- Symptoms and fever persist after 48 hours of antibiotic treatment. A different antibiotic may be needed.
- Symptoms return after treatment is completed.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page