Urinary tract infections

An adult guide to symptoms, treatment and follow-up

Burning, urgency and passing urine more often can suggest a urinary infection, but other conditions can cause similar symptoms.

Arrange assessment

- Contact the clinic if you think you have a urinary infection. A urine sample may be requested; collect it as instructed.
- Tell the clinician if you are pregnant, have diabetes, kidney disease, a catheter or reduced immunity. Men, older adults and children need specific assessment rather than a general self-care plan.

During treatment

- Take any prescribed antibiotic exactly as directed. Do not share it or use leftovers. If a sample is requested before antibiotics, follow the plan without delaying urgent treatment.
- Drink enough to avoid dehydration, unless you have a fluid restriction. Ask which pain relief is suitable for you.
- Cranberry products and cystitis sachets do not replace assessment or treatment of an established infection. Avoid cranberry products if you take warfarin.

Check your progress

- Seek review if symptoms worsen, or fail to start improving within 48 hours of treatment. Recurrent episodes need review.
- Report visible blood in urine and make sure follow-up is completed if it persists or returns. Keep the agreed plan for test results.

Seek urgent help

Fever or shivering with back or side pain, vomiting or feeling very unwell can indicate a kidney infection. Seek urgent assessment. Call 112 for confusion, collapse, severe breathing difficulty or difficulty waking.

My treatment and follow-up

Urinary tract infections

Do not hold urine for long periods; take time to empty your bladder.

This adult booklet does not provide treatment instructions for a child.

Symptoms started / urine sample date

Treatment prescribed

How and when to take it

Expected result / review date

Symptoms or side effects to report

Recurrent episodes and dates

Questions or notes for my appointment

Sources and further reading

NHS: urinary tract infections
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis/

UKHSA: UTI diagnostic and safety-netting guidance
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/urinary-tract-infection-diagnosis/diagnosis-of-urinary-tract-infections-quick-reference-tools-for-primary-care

General information. Follow your individual clinical plan. Sources checked 31 October 2026; review due October 2027.