

Urinary Tract Infections



What Can I Do To Feel Better Besides Taking Antibiotics?

- Your symptoms should begin to improve within a few hours of starting antibiotics and significantly improve 2 days after starting antibiotics.
- Aside from acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) as needed, additional medications are typically not necessary.
- If the pain is bad, you could consider over-the-counter products that temporarily numb your genital area sold by brand names such as Azo Standard® or Pyridium® (active ingredient = phenazopyridine).
- Drinking 6–8 glasses of water daily helps bacteria leave your urinary tract faster.
- Douches, powders, or harsh soaps in the genital area and noncotton underwear can be irritating and worsen symptoms.

How Can I Prevent a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) From Occurring Again?

- Stay well hydrated—aim for 6–8 glasses of water daily.
- Urinate immediately after sexual activity.
- Wipe front to back after using the bathroom.
- Avoid holding in urine for prolonged periods of time.
- If you use diaphragms or spermicides, you may want to discuss changing your birth control as these can increase the risk of UTIs.

What Should I Do if I Keep Having UTIs?

- If you have at least two UTIs in 6 months or at least three UTIs in 12 months, there are options you may want to consider to reduce your risk of future UTIs.
- Methenamine (an oral antiseptic) or cranberry products (juice or pills) are considered low-risk nonantibiotic options. Discuss with your clinician as there are some limitations on who can safely receive them, and the benefit may be modest.
- Topical estrogen is another nonantibiotic prescription option for postmenopausal women but has some risks so should only be taken under the supervision of a clinician.
- The above agents can be taken alone or in combination, per discussion with your clinician.
- If none of these options help after at least a 6- to 12-month trial period, your clinician might consider antibiotic prophylaxis.
 - Antibiotic prophylaxis can be associated with side effects so should not be started unless prescribed by your clinician.

What Should I Do if My Symptoms Are Not Improving?

- If your symptoms do not improve by day 3 or if at any point you develop fevers, chills, back pain, vomiting, or feel more ill, you should seek an in-person appointment or go to the emergency department.

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