

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) in Infants & Children

What is a UTI?

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are an illness of the kidneys or bladder caused by a germ. UTIs happen when germs enter the bladder or the kidneys. UTIs are easily treated but can cause problems if left alone.

Is Your Child at Risk for a UTI?

A risk factor is something that increases your chance for getting an illness. These things can increase your child's chance of getting a UTI:

- Not going to the bathroom often enough (in toilet trained kids)
- Using things that can bother the place where urine comes out (such as bubble bath)
- Infant boys who are not circumcised
- When urine flows backwards from the bladder up into the kidneys, called vesicoureteral (**VES**-ih-ko-yu-**REE**-ter-ul) reflux. This can happen because parts of the urinary tract are not normal.
- Blockage: where a blockage limits or stops urine flow

How Can I Tell if My Child Might Have a UTI?

- Fever (may be the only symptom in babies)
- Being fussy (in babies)
- Throwing up (babies or older children)
- Feeling the need to use the bathroom often (older children)
- Pain or burning with peeing (older children)
- Lower belly or back pain
- Blood in urine
- Potty trained children wetting themselves

How Can the Doctor Tell if My Child has a UTI?

Your doctor will ask about your child's symptoms and past health. They will do a physical exam. Tests will include:

- Urinalysis: a study of a urine sample
- Urine culture: detects germs in urine

How Do You Treat for a UTI?

Talk to your doctor about the best treatment for your child. Treatment options include:

- **Antibiotics:** Medicines that kill germs and will help clear up the infection
- **Fluids:** Drink plenty of fluids. Offer fluids so that your child continues to pee regularly.

What about Testing?

The doctor may want to see how your child's urinary tract looks by doing a test.

- Ultrasound of kidneys and bladder: Picture to see the kidneys, bladder, and the tubes between them
- Voiding cystourethrogram (**sis-toe-u-reeth-ro-gram**) or VCUG: X-ray picture to see how the bladder is working

The American Academy of Pediatrics has made suggestions for how doctors should treat the first UTI in children aged 2-24 months. They recommend these children have an ultrasound. A VCUG is advised **ONLY** if there is a problem seen on the ultrasound.

What Can I Do at Home?

- Give your child lots of fluids to drink. Offer fluids so that your child continues to pee regularly.
- Give your child all the medicine the doctor gave you for the infection. Do not stop the medicine, even if your child is feeling and acting better.
- Tell your doctor if your child's symptoms continue, such as fever.
- Take medicines for pain or fever only as directed by your doctor. Do not give aspirin to children.
- Keep all follow-up appointments.
- Do not use bubble bath, shampoo, or soaps in your child's bathwater.
- Encourage your toilet trained child to use the bathroom every 2-3 hours.
- UTIs can happen again in some children. Your doctor needs to diagnose and treat UTIs to prevent more problems.
- Call your doctor right away if you think your child is showing signs of a UTI.
- Let your doctor know if your child has a fever without a clear cause. More testing may also be needed if there are further UTIs.

Seek care or call your doctor if:

- Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a temperature of 100.4⁰F or more