

Let's Talk About...

Urinary tract infection

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is one of the most common infections in children. They happen when bacteria (germs) get into the bladder or kidneys. It affects the kidneys, ureter, bladder, and urethra.

What are the signs of a urinary tract infection?

There are two types of UTI infections: bladder infection known as cystitis (sis-TITE-us) and kidney infections called pyelonephritis (PIE-low-neh-FRITE-us). Symptoms are different depending on your child's age.

- **An older child with cystitis may have:**
 - Pain, burning, or stinging sensations when peeing
 - An increased urge or more frequent need to pee (although only a very small amount of pee may pass)
 - Fever
 - Walking up at night a lot to go to the bathroom
 - Wetting problems, even though the child is potty trained
 - Belly pain in the area of the bladder (generally below the belly button)
 - Lower back pain
 - Foul-smelling pee that may look cloudy or contain blood
- **Babies with cystitis may have:**
 - Poor appetite
 - Vomiting
 - Sleepiness, inactivity, and more fussiness
 - Fever higher than 101°F (38°C)
 - Diarrhea

- **Pyelonephritis**

- An infection that travels up the ureters to the kidneys is usually more serious. It causes many of these same symptoms, but the child often looks sicker and is more likely to have a fever (sometimes with shaking chills), pain in the side or back, severe tiredness, or vomiting.

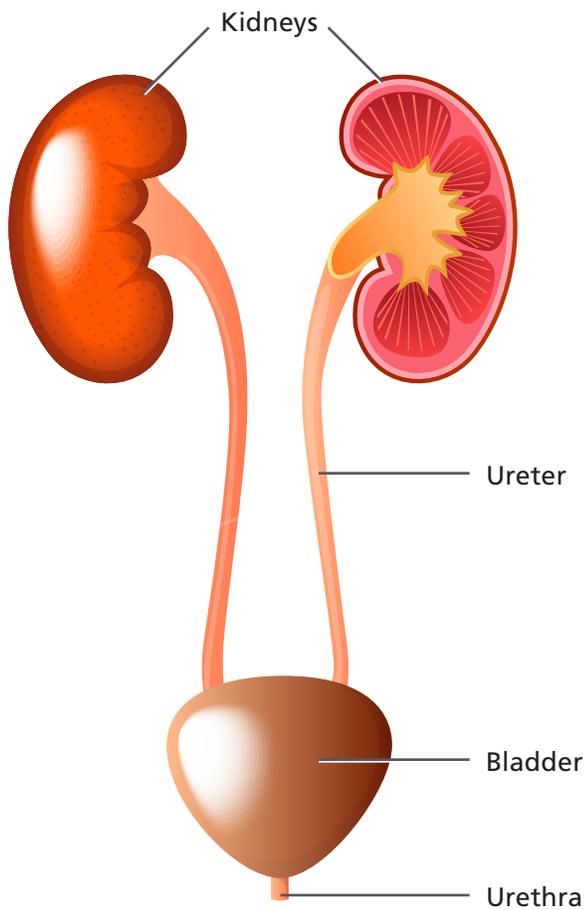
Half of all children with a UTI have no symptoms or only mild symptoms.

What causes a urinary tract infection?

A UTI is usually caused by bacteria (germs) entering the urinary tract through the urethra. UTI's can also be caused by:

- Chemicals in bubble bath
- Chemicals in shampoo
- Not changing diapers often enough
- A blockage or back-up in the urinary system
- Constipation (due to cross-contamination from poop)
- Poor hygiene after using the bathroom





- Have your child pee after baths.
- Sexually active girls should pee after having sex.
- Some children will have repeated UTIs and may need to take a daily antibiotic to prevent more infections.

How will I know if my child has a UTI?

To find out if your child has a urinary tract infection, your child's urine will have to be tested. You will have to get a sample of your child's urine. Your healthcare provider will tell you how to collect the sample. If you can't get your child's urine sample from home, a healthcare provider may use a catheter to get the urine sample. Infant girls and uncircumcised boys will need to be catheterized by a healthcare provider to get a sample for culture.

Healthcare providers in the lab will look for pus and bacteria in urine. They will then try to grow germs from the urine and find out which antibiotic will kill the germs. Once they find the type of bacteria, your child's healthcare provider can give them the right antibiotic.

Your child's healthcare provider may get an ultrasound of the kidneys and bladder and do other tests to see if there are any problems with your child's urinary system.

How is a urinary tract infection treated?

If your child's test results are positive for a UTI your healthcare provider will give you antibiotics. Follow the instructions when giving it to your child, and make sure they take all medicine. Encourage your child to drink fluids.

Your child may have to stay in the hospital to receive antibiotics through an IV (a small tube placed into a vein) instead of pills. The healthcare provider will let you know if this is needed.

Who can get a urinary tract infection?

Any one can get a urinary infection although children 2–6 years old are more likely to get infections. UTI's are much more common in girls because a girl's urethra is shorter and closer to the anus. Uncircumcised boys younger than 1 year have a slightly higher risk for a UTI. It is possible for a baby younger than 4 months old to get an UTI. This is a more serious infection and they may need to go to the hospital.

How do I help my child prevent a urinary tract infection?

- Teach your child to keep clean. Girls should be taught to wipe from front to back, especially after pooping.
- Avoid bubble bath or shampoo with chemicals that may irritate your child's urethra and provide a place for bacteria to grow.

