

Colorado State University-Pueblo
Student Health Services
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Cystitis (Bladder Infection)

Definition: Cystitis, a bladder infection, is usually caused by bacteria. Women are more prone to cystitis because the urethra (the connection between the bladder and the outside through which we urinate/pee) is short and the vagina and rectum are close to the opening of the urethra, called the urethral meatus. Men can also develop cystitis as well, however, their urethra is longer and they are less likely to get the type of bacteria that cause bladder infection. Cystitis is the least serious of the urinary tract infections. Untreated, it can lead to infection of the kidneys and you can become seriously ill.

Symptoms:

1. Frequent urination of small amounts
2. A feeling of urgency
3. Burning, pain, or difficulty urinating
4. Blood in urine
5. Pain in the lower abdomen or around the pubic bone
6. Lower back pain
7. Chills, fever, nausea, vomiting

Tests: You will probably be asked to give a clean-catch urine sample. For the clean catch specimen, you will be given special wipes to use on your perineum for girls (the area between your pubic bone and rectum). Remember girls wipe front to back at all times!!! For boys you will be asked to wipe off the tip of your penis. You will then be asked to urinate in a cup. The specimen will be sent to the laboratory. Sometimes, in a clinic a quick urinalysis is done by dipping a special stick into the urine and that can indicate infection.

Treatment: If your urine indicates a urinary tract infection (UTI) an antibiotic or sulfonamide will be prescribed by your primary care provider. Be sure to follow the primary care provider's directions and finish all of the prescribed medication.

Things You Can Do To Prevent Cystitis:

1. After going to the bathroom, if you are a girl, wipe front to back.
2. If your lovemaking involves anal sex make sure to clean your genital area before vaginal or oral intercourse.
3. During a tub bath, it is better not to use oils or bubble bath because it can help bacteria (germs) travel up your urethra.
4. Try to empty your bladder before and after sexual intercourse.
5. Avoid tight synthetic clothing. Cotton underwear is preferred.
6. Always urinate when you have the urge. Don't put it off until you feel like you are going to "pee" your pants. Bacteria love to grow in a warm, dark, stagnant environment.
7. Drink 6-8 glasses of water and juice a day. Sometimes cranberry capsules help (you can buy them anywhere).

8. Caffeine is a bladder irritant, meaning it can cause bladder irritation, pain, spasms. So decrease your caffeine intake if you suspect a bladder infection.
9. Smoking is also an irritant to the bladder.
10. A well balanced diet including 6 or more servings of fresh fruits and vegetables a day and 3-4 servings of whole grain breads, cereals, and pasta, will increase your resistance to infection.