

Patient Information Leaflet

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for practice news and information



Cystitis in Women

Practical tips to help you effectively manage
cystitis at home, and prevent recurrence.

For further information visit

www.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk

PLEASE NOTE: This information applies to non-pregnant women over the age of 14 ONLY.

Common Symptoms

- ◆ Burning / stinging when you pass urine
- ◆ Passing urine more often, in small amounts, or with urgency
- ◆ A pain, ache or dragging feeling in the low abdomen (tummy)
- ◆ Cloudy or stronger smelling urine
- ◆ Fever

What causes cystitis?

- ◇ **Bacterial germs** - These germs live in and around the anus (back passage), and get into the urethra (water passage) and bladder where they multiply and cause irritation
- ◇ **Other germs (occasionally)** - Thrush, some sexually transmitted germs (e.g herpes, chlamydia)
- ◇ **Allergies** - Vaginal deodorants, perfumed soap, talc, detergents in washing powder
- ◇ **Irritable bladder** - i.e a sensitive bladder

Most attacks of cystitis last 5-7 days, however studies suggest that 50% of cases will be better within 3 days even without antibiotics

SELF –HELP TREATMENTS

There are many ways you can treat the symptoms of cystitis without seeing your GP

- ⇒ **Drink plenty** - while you may feel you don't want to drink much to avoid needing to pass urine it is important that you do, as going more often will help to flush the germs and irritants out of your system.
- ⇒ **Fruit juice** - particularly cranberry juice as it helps to fight germs
- ⇒ **Over the counter medications** - take regular ibuprofen and/or paracetamol to help ease the pain
- ⇒ **Citrate** - there are many preparations containing citrate that can help, your pharmacist will be able to tell what they have available
- ⇒ **Herbal remedies** - some people find herbal remedies such as herbal tea helpful

CONTACTING THE DOCTOR

When you contact the surgery please inform the receptionist of your condition.

They will ask you some simple questions as advised by the Drs regarding your symptoms. Depending on your answers this will either be passed onto the duty Dr, or you may be asked to provide a urine sample for testing.

Antibiotics will only be prescribed if the doctor feels the infection is likely to be caused by a bacteria. If a bacteria is not suspected there may be another straight forward reason for your symptoms but you may need to speak to a doctor about this in a routine appointment

You should see a GP if...

- ◆ An attack continues for more than 5 days and is showing no signs of settling
 - ◆ You are suffering from frequent reoccurring attacks
 - ◆ You have other symptoms such as vaginal soreness or discharge, pain in the kidney area or become very unwell with a high fever or vomiting
 - ◆ You are pregnant, male or under the age of 14
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Prevention - It's not always possible to prevent cystitis but there are some steps you can take which may help.

- **Don't use perfumed bubble bath, soap, or talcum powder** around your genitals - use plain, unperfumed varieties
- **Have a shower, rather than a bath**, to avoid exposing your genitals to the chemicals in your cleaning products for too long
- **Always empty your bladder fully** when you go to the toilet
- **Don't wait to go if you need to urinate**: delaying it can place extra stress on your bladder and could make it more vulnerable to infection
- **Wear underwear made from cotton** rather than synthetic material such as nylon
- **Avoid wearing tight jeans and trousers**
- **Always wipe from the front of your genital area to the back**, not back to front, when you go to the toilet
- **Some people find certain types of food and drink make their cystitis worse** - such as coffee, fruit juice or spicy foods. If there is anything that triggers your cystitis, you may wish to avoid it

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