

Urinary tract infections (UTIs):

UTIs are common in women. This condition refers to infection of the bladder (cystitis), urethra (urethritis), ureters (ureteritis) and kidneys (pyelonephritis). Approximately 50% of women will experience at least one UTI in her lifetime. The incidence is higher in females than males due to a shorter urethra in females. This is one of the reasons.

Common symptoms:

These include pain over the pelvic area, urge to urinate, burning or painful urination and in severe cases blood may be seen in the urine. Back pain, nausea and fever may indicate a kidney infection.

Risk factors:

- apart from the shorter urethra,
- the close proximity of pathogens around the vagina,
- incomplete emptying of the bladder,
- a structural abnormality of the urinary tract system, and
- vaginal intercourse in the last 2 weeks

How is a UTI diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually based on a typical history and a urinalysis test (referred to as a dipstick test). The urinalysis picks up blood cells, nitrite and leucocyte esterase levels in the urine that indicate an infection. A bacteriological urine culture is more accurate as it is able to identify the type of bacteria and provides information of the most appropriate antibiotic for treatment. In complicated cases your doctor might advise a scan of the kidneys and/or a bladder scope.

What is a recurrent UIT?

This refers to 2 uncomplicated UTIs in a 6-month period or 3 infections in 1 year.

How is a UTI treated?

The standard treatment includes an antibiotic for at least 3 days, analgesics to relieve pain and discomfort, drink plenty water, avoid drinks that irritate your bladder (such as coffee, alcohol and citrus juices etc.). The current information on cranberry juice is inconclusive.