



## Urinary Tract Infection

### **What is a urinary tract infection?**

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection of the urinary tract. This can involve the urethra (tube that carries urine from the bladder to outside the body), the bladder or the kidneys. UTI's happen when bacteria(germs) enter the urinary tract. They are more common in girls than boys, especially after the first few months of life, because of their short urethra although uncircumcised boys are at slightly higher risk than circumcised boys.

### **What causes UTI's?**

These factors can increase the chances of getting a UTI:

- Constipation
- Not urinating on a frequent basis or over holding urination
- Not wiping properly after using the bathroom or difficulties with hygiene
- A blockage in the urinary system
- A condition called vesicoureteral reflux (VUR), in which urine flows backward from the bladder to the kidneys

### **How is a UTI diagnosed?**

- Physical exam by primary care provider
- History of symptoms
- Urine tests, including a urinalysis (a quick study of the urine) and a culture of the urine (tells us about the specific bacteria in the urine). How the urine is collected depends on the child's age. Toilet trained children might simply need to pee into a sterile cup. For children in diapers, urine collection by a catheter (a thin, soft tube) inserted into the urethra and up into the bladder is preferred.

### **What are the symptoms of a UTI?**

Symptoms of a UTI can be different for all ages.

#### **Infants:**

- Fever of 100 or higher
- Irritability
- Poor feeding
- Vomiting
- Foul smelling urine



**Toddlers and young children:**

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Crying when urinating
- Refusing to urinate
- Urine is foul smelling or cloudy

**Older Children through adulthood:**

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Painful urination
- Frequency or urgency of urination
- Urine is foul smelling or cloudy
- Pain in the lower back, lower belly, or side area of body (flank)

**How is a UTI treated?**

UTI's are treated with an antibiotic to kill the bacteria that is causing the infection. When giving your child the antibiotic, always follow the specific instructions given by your child's medical care provider. It is important to give the antibiotic for as long as your child's medical care provider tells you. Do not stop the antibiotic, even if your child is feeling better, their symptoms may be gone but the germs are still in the urine.

**What you can do to help your child:**

- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids, especially water
- Avoid constipation
- Have your child urinate every few hours during the day
- Always wipe girls front to back, avoid wiping back and forth
- Warm baths if urination is painful. Avoid bubble baths and perfumed soaps
- Sexually active girls should urinate as soon as possible after intercourse

**Questions?**

This information is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call your clinic.