



MERCY MEDICAL GROUP

Bladder Infection (Cystitis)

DESCRIPTION

Cystitis is an infection in the bladder where bacteria do not live normally. Women have cystitis more often than men do because the female urinary passage (urethra) from the bladder is much shorter in women, allowing bacteria to travel there more easily.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Burning sensation with urination
- Urge to urinate frequently
- Passing smaller amounts of urine
- Cloudy or bloody urine
- Lower abdominal discomfort
- Unintentional flow of urine
- Bad-smelling urine
- Low grade fever.

CAUSES

Normally, urine flows out of the bladder, through the urethra and out of the body. Sometimes bacteria, not normally present in urine, make their way into the urethra and bladder. There they multiply quickly causing a bladder infection. There are many ways that bacteria may enter your urinary tract, such as:

- Wiping improperly (back to front) after a bowel movement
- Sexual intercourse which can push bacteria into the urethra and bladder
- Using a urinary catheter to empty the bladder
- Using a diaphragm or spermicidal gel
- Enlargement of the prostate gland preventing the flow of urine in men.

RISK FACTORS

- Sexual activity
- Chronic illness that has lowered resistance to infection
- Excess alcohol consumption
- Wearing non-cotton underwear
- Bathing with bath salts or bubble bath.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Urinate when you have the urge
- Urinate just before and soon after intercourse
- Use a water-based lubricant (K-Y Jelly) during intercourse
- Take showers instead of baths
- Drink eight glasses of water each day
- Try not to limit urination

- Do not douche or use feminine hygiene sprays
- Wipe from front to back after bowel movements
- Use underwear and nylons that have cotton crotches
- Avoid wearing tight-fitting jeans and pants
- Change sanitary napkins every three to four hours
- Avoid deodorant tampons.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Antibiotics to fight infection
- Urinary analgesics to relieve pain
- Antispasmodics to relieve pain
- Avoid sexual activity until you are symptom free for two weeks to allow inflammation to subside
- Drink six to eight glasses of water per day
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol during treatment
- Drink cranberry juice to acidify the urine.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Inadequate treatment may lead to chronic bladder infections, kidney infections and possible kidney failure.

CONSIDER NOTIFYING YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:

- Symptoms do not start to go away within a few days of antibiotic treatment
- Symptoms such as fever, low back pain, blood in urine, nausea or vomiting develop
- Symptoms return after you have finished taking all of your antibiotics.