



## **MERCY MEDICAL GROUP**

### **Kidney Infection (Pyelonephritis)**

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#### **DESCRIPTION**

Pyelonephritis is a bacterial infection of the kidneys that affects both sexes, but is more common in women of all ages. A kidney infection in a male of any age may indicate a serious underlying problem such as a tumor or prostate disorder. The kidneys filter waste material from the blood and make urine.

#### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

- Fever and shaking chills
- Burning sensation with urination
- Frequent urge to urinate
- Cloudy or bloody urine
- Aching in one or both sides of the back
- Abdominal pain
- Marked fatigue.

#### **RISK FACTORS**

- Diabetes
- Chronic bladder infection (cystitis)
- Bladder tumor
- Infrequent emptying of the bladder
- Paralysis from spinal-cord injury or tumor
- Pregnancy.

#### **CAUSES**

Bacteria invade one or both kidneys. The infection may begin in the bladder. The most common sources of bacterial kidney infections are:

- Sexual activity in women, which allows the bacteria to enter the urethra and bladder
- Infections in another part of the body that travel through the blood or lymph glands
- Blockage or abnormality of the urinary system, caused by stones, obstructions, tumors, bladder dysfunction from nerve diseases or congenital problems
- Catheters, tubes or surgical procedures used for other medical conditions.

#### **PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

There are no specific preventive measures for males; however, females should:

- Wipe from front to back after bowel movements
- Avoid prolonged moisture around the urethra, such as that caused by nylon underpants or wet swim suits
- Avoid sexual positions that irritate or hurt the urethra or bladder
- Urinate within 15 minutes after intercourse
- Urinate when you have the urge.

#### **TREATMENT**

- Collection of urine for analysis and culture
- Take all the antibiotics that are prescribed
- Urinary analgesics may be used for pain
- Avoid long periods without urinating
- Drink six to eight glasses of water per day
- Drink cranberry juice to acidify the urine
- See the doctor for follow up urine culture to verify the infection is cured.

#### **ACTIVITY**

- Rest in bed until any fever and discomfort subside
- Do not resume sexual relations until fever or urinary symptoms have cleared.

#### **POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS**

Inadequate treatment may lead to chronic kidney infections, possible kidney failure and high blood pressure.

#### **CONSIDER NOTIFYING YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:**

- Symptoms do not start to go away within a few days (48 hours) of beginning antibiotic treatment
- Symptoms return after you have finished taking all of your medicine
- New, unexplained symptoms develop.