

Tips for preventing urine infections

This information sheet is for women who regularly experience urine infections or cystitis (bladder infections). It outlines some simple things that you can do to help prevent urine infections.

- After passing urine, wipe yourself from front to back. This will prevent bacteria from your back passage, such as E-coli (naturally found in your bowel), from getting into your bladder and causing an infection.
- Make sure you drink enough liquid. We recommend you try to drink eight cups (one and a half litres, five mugs or about three pints) of clear fluid per day. This amount of fluid will make your urine less concentrated, so it is less likely to irritate your bladder. It will also flush your bladder thoroughly, helping to prevent infections.
- Try drinking cranberry juice regularly. This may help to reduce the chance of you developing an infection. Cranberry juice can help prevent E-coli bacteria, which are the most common cause of urine infections, from sticking to the bladder and causing an infection. Try to drink 200ml twice a day.

However, you should not drink cranberry juice if you have diabetes, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, a stomach ulcer or a hiatus hernia (where part of the stomach pushes up into the chest, making you more prone to heartburn), as this could make your symptoms worse. **Do not drink cranberry juice if you are taking warfarin, as it interacts with the medicine and makes your blood thinner.** Cranberry juice capsules are also available.

- Perfumed soaps, bubble baths and toiletries, can irritate the urethra (the tube that takes urine from the bladder to out of your body), so try to use products that are not perfumed.
- Try to avoid wearing tights, tight clothing or knickers made from man-made fibres.
- Empty your bladder before and after having sex, as this will help to flush out any bacteria. Seek advice from your healthcare professional regarding the different sexual practices and the risks associated with urinary tract infections.
- Try to empty your bladder properly. Sit on the toilet for a couple of seconds after you have finished passing urine and then try to pass urine again to make sure you get rid of any last drops. Tighten your pelvic floor muscles, as this may also get rid of any last drops of urine in your bladder. Please ask a member of staff if you would like our leaflet **Pelvic floor exercises for women.**

- D-mannose sugar is a natural sugar which coats the E-coli bacteria preventing them from sticking to the urinary tract. This could be used instead of normal sugar and may reduce the risk of you developing a urine infection.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about anything mentioned in this leaflet, or if you would like more information please speak to:

- **Florence Ilegbusi** (continence nurse specialist) on **020 7188 2083** (Mondays, and Wednesday – Friday) and **020 7188 2093** (Tuesday)
- **Ellie Stewart** (urogynecology nurse specialist) on **020 7188 3671** (Monday – Tuesday). Please leave a message on the answerphone and she will get back to you on her return.
- **Elaine Hazell** (continence nurse specialist) on **020 7188 6783** (Monday – Friday)

Further sources of information

The cystitis and overactive bladder foundation (COB)

The COB foundation provides information for sufferers of cystitis or an overactive bladder.

t: 01908 569 169 w: www.cobfoundation.org

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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