

# Reducing the risk of a urinary tract infection (UTI)

## Guidance for patients and carers

### What is a urinary tract infection (UTI)?

A UTI is an infection in the bladder or the urethra (the small tube connecting the bladder with the outside of the body). This is caused when bacteria (germs) get into the urine and begin to grow. If you have a catheter, you may be at a higher risk of contracting a UTI. The advice provided below is to help prevent recurring infections in future.

### Symptoms of a UTI may include:

- pain or burning sensation when passing urine
- passing urine more frequently
- sudden urgency to pass urine
- cloudy urine or blood in urine
- pain in lower abdomen or sides
- increased confusion
- fever.

**Anyone experiencing these symptoms should make an appointment with their GP.**

Outside your GP's opening hours, please contact SELDOC on Tel: 020 8693 9066.

**Note:** for a person with dementia, confusion or difficulty expressing themselves, fever and/or increased confusion may be the only apparent symptoms.

### How to prevent UTIs



**Stay hydrated** – This will keep the kidneys and bladder healthy and help prevent infection. Try to drink 8–10 glasses of fluid a day.

**Eat a healthy, balanced diet** – It is important to eat a balanced diet of fruit, vegetables and fibre to avoid constipation. Try to build some exercise into your daily routine.



**Avoid constipation** – Bowel habits tend to vary between individuals. A healthy person may go as often as two or three times a day, or as little as three times a week. What is important is that it's regular. If you need to strain, your stool is painful to pass, or your bowel habits change and become very loose, **see your community pharmacist**. If this persists, please see your GP.

### Women:

If you have vaginal dryness/discomfort or feel a lump, **see your GP or contact SELDOC**.

### Men:

If you have to urinate frequently, need to rush to the toilet, have difficulty or need to strain to start to pass urine, or poor urine flow, **see your GP or contact SELDOC**.

### Other useful advice:

- Go to the toilet as soon as you feel the need to urinate.
- Wipe from front to back after going to the toilet.
- Practise good hygiene by washing your genitals every day, and before having sex.

### Is your bladder working properly?

Incontinence? Need to pass urine frequently? Leaking before you get to the toilet? Difficulty passing urine? **See your GP** – help is available.