

# Tips for preventing urine infections

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**This information sheet may be useful for people 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. If your partner uses a condom avoid the ones that contain spermicides they can destroy your natural bacteria.
- 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.
- D-mannose sugar is a natural sugar which coats the e-coli bacteria preventing it 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.
- Try to keep your bowel patterns regular

## **Are there any other important points?**

This booklet includes advice from specialists, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and other sources. You should read this booklet with any advice your GP or other healthcare professional may already have given you. Alternative treatments can be discussed in more detail with your urologist or specialist nurse.

## **Disclaimer**

While we have made every effort to be sure the information in this leaflet is accurate, we cannot guarantee there are no errors or omissions. We cannot accept responsibility for any loss resulting from something that anyone has, or has not, done as a result of the information in this booklet.

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