

How can I prevent UTIs?

- Catheterization technique
 - Wash hands before catheterization
 - Clean meatus before catheterization
- Monthly or more frequent catheter changes; the longer the catheter is left indwelling, the higher the risk for UTI.
- Keep your drainage system closed with as few disconnections as possible (changing the drainage bag regularly does not prevent UTIs).
- Secure catheter to leg.
- Keep bag lower than bladder to prevent backflow.
- Empty bag regularly.
- Daily antibiotics for prevention are not recommended because they predispose to drug-resistant germs.
- Drink plenty of fluids daily (6–8 glasses or about 48–64 oz.).
- Some supplements may help:
 - Oral cranberry products
 - Probiotics
 - D-Mannose

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Urinary Tract Infections in Persons with Urinary Catheters and Neurogenic Bladders

Information for patients & families



Urinary catheters

Any type of catheter in the bladder increases the risk of having bacteria in the urine.

However, bacteria in the urine **does not** mean you have a UTI – in most cases bacteria inhabit the bladder but do not cause an infection.

What are the symptoms of UTI?

- Fever and chills
- Flank pain
- Bladder spasms
- Lower abdominal pain
- Low blood pressure

In people with spinal cord injuries, other symptoms may include:

- Increased spasticity, anxiety and apprehension
- Irregular or racing heartbeat
- Sudden high blood pressure
- Pounding headache
- Flushing of the skin
- Profuse sweating, lightheadedness, dizziness or confusion.

Several common symptoms do not necessarily indicate a UTI:

- Confusion
- Weakness
- Cloudy and/or foul-smelling urine are not symptoms of UTIs.

How is a UTI diagnosed?

You need the symptoms of UTI and an abnormal urine test (urinalysis and urine culture).

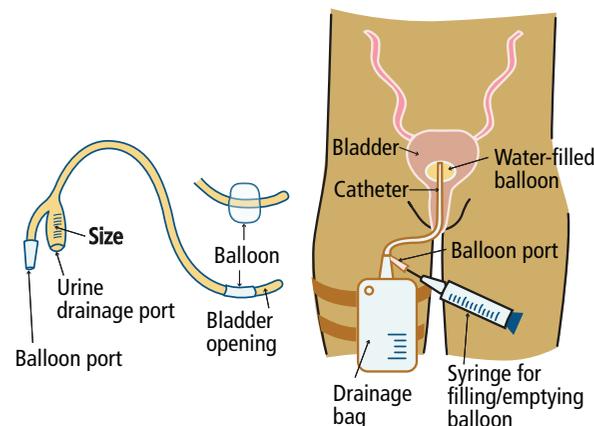
A urine test to look for a UTI should not be done if you do not have symptoms and signs concerning for UTI.

Unfortunately, urine testing without symptoms is not helpful. Most people with catheters have bacteria in their urine and abnormal urine tests without a UTI.

How is a urine sample obtained if a catheter is in place?

Urine should only be taken from the urine drainage port and never from the bag.

The catheter should be changed first to get a fresh specimen.



When do I need antibiotics?

- You have symptoms of a UTI **and**
- Your urine tests positive for a UTI

Antibiotics are **not needed every time** bacteria is found in the urine and you have no symptoms.

Why should antibiotics be avoided, if not needed?

Antibiotics have side effects:

Allergic reaction, fever, rash, nausea, vomiting, kidney damage, diarrhea.

Antibiotics increase the risk for future infections:

Antibiotics can kill "good" germs natural to our body. This can lead to a potentially fatal and severe diarrhea caused by *C. difficile*.

Antibiotics promote "stronger," resistant germs:

Antibiotics can make germs become "drug resistant," which means they are harder to kill with commonly used antibiotics and fewer treatment choices are available.