

Cystitis

Cystitis can occur at any age, and affects women more than men.

Cause

Cystitis is an inflammation of the bladder. This is usually caused by an infection.

Symptoms

Symptoms of cystitis include pain when urinating, needing to pass urine frequently, pain above the pelvic area after urinating and smelly or cloudy urine.

How do you get it?

Cystitis is usually caused by bacteria which live in the bowel. These bacteria can cause problems if they pass up the urethra and into the bladder. This can occur when you wipe yourself from back to front after a bowel movement, or during sexual intercourse, especially vigorous sex in a new relationship ('honeymoon sex'), exercise or traveling, or sometimes for no apparent reason.

How do I know if I have it?

If it is painful or uncomfortable when you urinate then you may have cystitis. Testing for cystitis involves a urine test by a doctor. The doctor may also check for other possible causes of the pain – this might include a pelvic examination or an X-ray or ultrasound of the urinary system.

Some sexually transmissible infections (STIs) can also cause infection of the urethra, making it painful to urinate. The doctor might test for these infections as well, which usually involves a swab from the urethra or cervix and/or a urine test.

Treatment/management

Cystitis is usually treated with antibiotics. You should also rest and drink plenty of water. Ural (available from pharmacies) can help reduce the acidity of urine, but if symptoms don't settle down they need to be followed up.

Why is treatment important?

If cystitis is left untreated it can occasionally lead to serious kidney infection, causing long-term damage. If the irritation is related to an STI, this can lead to inflammation and damage to the reproductive organs.

Prevention

You can reduce the chance of getting cystitis by drinking plenty of water, always wiping from front to back after going to the toilet, not holding on for too long when you need to urinate and passing urine after having sex. You should also avoid using perfumed soap or toilet paper or wearing tight pants. For more information about healthy genitals go to <http://www.fpwa.org.au/genitalhealthforwomen.htm>

For more information about cystitis contact the **Sexual Health Helpline** on 9227 6178 or 1800 198 205 (country callers) or email sexhelp@fpwa.org.au

Practising safe sex reduces the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmissible infections (STIs).



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Sexual Health Helpline (08) 9227 6178 or 1800 198 205 (Country Callers)
sexhelp@fpwa.org.au

Quarry Health Centre for under 25s
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