

## Is hospitalization required?

Usually a UTI can be treated in the long term care or transitional care facility. The resident may need to go to the hospital if symptoms get worse.

## How can UTIs be prevented?

Help residents to drink plenty of fluids and to have good personal hygiene. Wash your hands often and follow the 4 moments for hand hygiene in your long term care or transitional care facility.

### Did You Know?

- The most common signs of a UTI are fever and painful urination.
- Dark or cloudy urine does not indicate a UTI.
- Smelly urine does not indicate a UTI.
- Increased confusion or wandering does not indicate a UTI.
- Increased falls or changes in physical condition do not indicate a UTI.
- Changes in mental or physical condition are often due to dehydration. Symptoms often go away with extra fluids and rest.
- Antibiotics are not risk-free. Antibiotics can lead to infection with *C. difficile* (severe diarrhea) and an increased chance that infections later on will be resistant.

### USE ANTIBIOTICS WISELY

- ✓ WHEN REQUIRED
- ✓ AS DIRECTED

P&T Approved: 2016-Dec-13  
RMAC Approved: 2017-Jan-16  
Date of Issue: 2017-Feb-15  
Date of Revision:  
Form #: PMH1336



# Urinary Tract Infections in Long Term and Transitional Care



## Antimicrobial Stewardship

Information for Clients, Family and Visitors

Adapted with permission from Alberta Health Services and Do Bugs Need Drugs



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

A urinary tract infection or “UTI” is an infection of the kidneys, bladder or the tubes that pass urine out of the body. A UTI occurs when bacteria get into the urinary tract and cause an infection.

UTIs can be caused by many different kinds of bacteria. UTI is a common diagnosis among residents in long term care and transitional care. The use of catheters increases the chances of getting a UTI.

## What are the symptoms of a UTI?

Symptoms of a UTI can include:

- burning or pain when urinating
- fever or chills
- frequent urge to urinate but only a small amount of urine comes out
- inability to hold urine
- pain or tenderness in the abdomen or on one side of the back below the ribs
- blood in the urine

An assessment by the nurse or doctor, along with a urine sample will show if the resident has a UTI.

## Do changes in the smell or appearance of urine indicate a UTI?

Diet, dehydration and other medications can affect the way that urine looks and smells. The resident will have some of the symptoms listed above if a UTI is present.

- Foul odor does not mean that the resident has a UTI
- Dark or cloudy color does not mean that the resident has a UTI

## Does a blocked catheter indicate a bacterial infection?

A blocked catheter does not mean there is an infection or that antibiotics are required.

## Does confusion or agitation indicate a UTI?

Change in behavior and/or confusion alone do not mean there is an infection or that antibiotics are required. Other conditions that can cause these symptoms include dehydration, pain, medication side effects.

## How can I help?

Residents may not be able to tell you how they feel. Family members or health care aides are often the first to recognize the symptoms of a UTI. Look for changes in normal behaviours, such as needing to urinate more often or more urgently, as signs of a UTI. Report these changes to nursing staff.

Often symptoms go away with extra fluid intake. Help the resident to drink plenty of fluids and to rest. Residents often feel better both physically and mentally once they have enough fluid in their bodies.

## How are UTIs treated?

Antibiotics are used to treat UTIs. Antibiotics are not required unless the physical examination shows the resident has a UTI. Laboratory tests will indicate the best antibiotic to treat the UTI.

Antibiotics should not be given unless the resident has a UTI. Taking antibiotics when they are not required can lead to other serious medical problems including diarrhea, yeast infections and infections later on that cannot be cured with antibiotics (also known as antimicrobial resistance).

## Why are antibiotics sometimes stopped or changed when treating a UTI?

Sometimes antibiotics are started before laboratory results are available. The laboratory results may show that the antibiotic is not required or that a different antibiotic should be used.