

Idaho Falls Pediatrics

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

The urinary tract is where extra water and certain wastes are removed from the body. The kidneys filter blood and make urine. After the urine is made, it moves out of the kidneys into the ureters. The ureters are long tubes that drain the urine from the kidneys to the bladder. Urine is stored in the bladder until a person urinates. When you urinate, urine then goes through a tube called the urethra and leaves the body.

Normally, there are no germs (bacteria) in the urinary tract. When bacteria are found, this may be a urinary tract infection. The infection can be in the bladder and /or kidneys. Kidney infections can be very serious.

Signs of a urinary tract infection:

- Frequency - having to urinate often
- Urgency - having to urinate immediately
- Burning with urination
- Urine that smells bad or different
- Redness or irritation of the genital area in girls
- Fever
- Urine color changes, such as cloudy or blood-tinged
- Wetting the bed at night, or wetting pants during the day, or both
- Fussiness in babies
- Pain in the abdomen, back, or side

How to see if your child has a urinary tract infection:

The doctor will ask for a urine sample from your child. The urine will be collected in a certain way. Your child's nurse will give you the special instructions. This urine will be checked for many types of cells. This test for bacteria will take about two days. Some children who have urinary tract infections may need x-rays or other special tests. These special tests will help the doctor treat your child properly.

Treatment of urinary tract infections:

Your child may be given antibiotics to get rid of the bacteria. It is very important for your child to take all the medication the doctor prescribes, even if he is feeling better. Severe UTI's may need to be treated with intravenous (IV) or intramuscular (IM) antibiotics. Some children may need to be hospitalized. Be sure to keep all your child's return appointments. Your doctor may want to check your child's urine to make sure the infection is gone. The best treatment for urinary tract infections is prevention.

Prevention of a urinary tract infection:

1. Have your child drink lots of fluids. He should drink something at least every two hours while awake. Limit the amount of drinks with caffeine and carbonation (ie: soda pop)

2. Remind your child to go to the bathroom often. During the day he should urinate at least every three hours. When urine stays in the bladder for a long time, bacteria may grow.
3. Be sure to have your child completely empty his bladder. When urinating, he should not "rush in and rush out" of the bathroom. Before going to bed have him completely empty his bladder.
4. After urinating or having a bowel movement, have your child to wipe from front to back and drop the tissue in the toilet. Keep doing this until the tissue is clean and dry. Do not wipe back to front. Use white toilet tissue without perfumes.
5. Help your child avoid constipation. A lot of stool in the lower intestine can make it hard to totally empty the bladder. Provide foods high in fiber like fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads (See "Constipation" Care Card).
6. Have your child wear white cotton underwear. Avoid tight jeans, slacks and tights. Moisture trapped by nylon and tight clothing, as well as dyes in clothing, can cause irritation.
7. Do not use bubble bath or shampoo in your child's bath water. Some laundry detergents can also cause irritation.

8. Teach your child to wash his hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom.

Call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600 if your child has any of the following problems or symptoms:

- Irritation, discharge or itching in the genital or anal area
- Unexplained fever more than 101.5 °F or 36.6 °C
- Burning when urinating
- Severe back, side or abdominal pain
- Other problems with urinating

NOTE: This information is provided as a public education service. The information does not replace instructions your physician gives you. If you have an emergency please call the Hospital at If you have questions about your child's care, please call your physician or Idaho Falls Pediatrics directly.