



# How to prevent UTIs

Urinary tract infections, or UTIs, are never fun. The symptoms of a UTI—frequent, urgent, and painful urination—are experienced at some point by 40 percent of women. But why do we frequently get these infections? And how can they be prevented and treated? Maven OB-GYN Carol Russell, DO, explains.



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## What's a UTI?

"Under normal circumstances, your urine is sterile and has no bacteria in it," Russell says. But if bacteria makes its way into your urinary tract, you've got the beginnings of a UTI. UTIs can cause pelvic pain, a persistent need to urinate, pain while urinating, and bloody urine. If left untreated, UTIs can lead to serious health issues.

## How do you get a UTI?

There are a variety of ways that bacteria might make its way to your urethral opening. Sex can move bacteria around, as can wiping from back to front, instead of front to back, when you're using the bathroom. Wearing a pad, wet bathing suit, or other damp or unclean covering for long periods of time could also contribute, as can certain types of birth control, such as diaphragms, Russell says.

## How can I prevent UTIs?

You can protect yourself from UTIs by:

- Staying hydrated
- Peeing after sex
- Practicing good hygiene, including wiping well after going to the bathroom and showering regularly

A lot of people point to cranberry juice as a cure for UTIs, but the research on this is mixed. That being said, drinking cranberry juice (the pure stuff, not the sugary juice cocktail) certainly won't hurt, and can help you stay hydrated.



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## What should I do if I have a UTI?

UTIs are best treated with prescribed antibiotics. Some doctors may prescribe antibiotics for a UTI without requiring an in-person visit. But to get the best treatment for your specific infection, it can help to get a test done to determine what bacteria is causing your UTI. Talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options if you experience recurrent UTIs.

## How Maven can help

If you're feeling the pain of a UTI, you're not alone. You have free access to Maven, the world's largest virtual clinic for women and families.

Maven can help you:

- Find 24/7 support with top-rated providers like OB-GYNs for any reproductive healthcare need, including UTIs, yeast infections, and more
- Learn more about how to prevent and treat UTIs with a library of clinically-vetted content
- Create a Care Plan for your treatment with your dedicated Care Advocate

