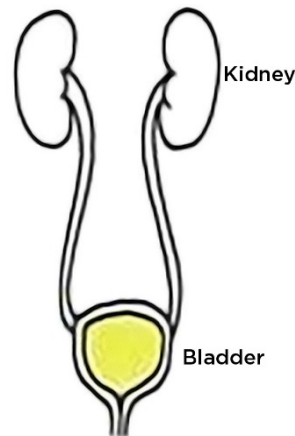


Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are very common. To prevent UTIs, your child needs good toileting habits, which you can teach.

What are UTIs?

UTIs are the 2nd most common infection in children. UTIs can happen in the bladder or the kidney. Infections are caused by germs in the pee (urine). They are more common in children with vaginas than children with penises.



What are the signs and symptoms of a bladder infection?

- Increased frequency of wetting pants or underpants
- Pain with peeing (urination)
- Peeing more than once per hour (about once every hour)
- An unexplained fever greater than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
- Pain in the lower stomach

What are the signs and symptoms of a kidney infection?

- Increased wetting of pants or underpants
- Pain with peeing (urination)
- Peeing a lot (about once every hour)
- An unexplained fever; fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
- Pain in the lower stomach
- Lower back (flank) pain
- Throwing up (vomiting)
- Very tired (lethargy)

1 of 3

To Learn More

- Urology Clinic Weekdays:
206-987-2509
- Evenings, weekends, holidays:
206-987-2000, ask for on-call Urology provider
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

What do I do if I notice signs of a bladder or kidney infection?

Take your child to see a **primary care provider (PCP), Seattle Children's Urgent Care or go to the emergency department** if these signs are present. They can recommend treatment if there is a UTI.

What can I do to prevent UTIs?

There are many things that you can do at home to help decrease the risk of your child developing UTIs:

Bladder retraining

Many children get UTIs because they wait until the last minute before going to the bathroom or do not go to the bathroom very often. This habit of holding pee and ignoring when their bodies tell them it is time to go to the bathroom is called "dysfunctional voiding."

There are many signs that your child may be holding their urine.

- Children with these habits may squat down on their heels, cross their legs, or hold between their legs to keep from wetting.
- Other children may pee small amounts often and not empty their bladders all the way.
- They might pee only until they relieve the feeling of pressure or because they are in a hurry even though their bladders are not empty.

These habits may lead to wetting accidents and bladder infection.

Constipation management

About 80-90% of children get UTIs from a bacteria found in poop (stool) called E. coli. When your child has trouble pooping (is constipated), E. coli gets into the bladder more easily. This increases the risk for an UTI.

You can make it easier for your child to poop by:

- Having them drink water throughout the day.
- Increasing fiber in their diet.
- Limiting constipating foods like cheese, whole milk, white breads and pastas, and bananas.

The goal is to have a soft poop that is easy to pass and does not have cracks once a day.

Timed voiding

You can help your child to prevent this problem by having them pee on a schedule. This is called "timed voiding." This means peeing every 2 to 3 hours during the day. Some children may need to go more often.

As your child starts doing timed voiding, you might have to help them change their habits. It may take months to see improvement.

- Younger children who are between 3 and 8 years old will need an adult to remind them to go to the bathroom on schedule.
- Older children who are between 8 and 12 years old still need an adult to monitor them. They could use their own reminder system, like setting a watch alarm to go off every 2 to 3 hours.

- At school, an adult will need to remind your child to go to the bathroom every 2 to 3 hours. Letting children pee when they feel like it does not work for children who have dysfunctional voiding. We can work with you and your child's teacher to set up a plan for school and for home.
- The goal of the timed voiding schedule is to train your child to pee often on their own. Peeing every 2 to 3 hours needs to become a lifetime habit.

Evaluation of children with UTIs

Any infant or child who has a positive UTI on a urine test, needs a urinary tract evaluation. Your child's primary care provider (PCP) may also recommend a referral to a pediatric urology specialist. Your child's PCP or specialist may recommend testing including:

- An ultrasound
- An x-ray of the bladder and kidneys called a voiding cysto urethrogram (VCUG)
- An advanced ultrasound called contrast enhanced ultrasound (CEVUS)

Where can I learn more?

To learn more about how to keep your child's bladder healthy and free from infection, see our handout:

"Toileting Tips: How to Teach Your Child Good Potty Habits."
seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE177.pdf