



HEALTH INFORMATION

Cystitis

What is cystitis?

Cystitis is a common lower urinary tract infection and means inflammation of the bladder. A common cause of cystitis is a bacterial infection. This may develop when bacteria get into the bladder and multiply. This can happen if you don't empty your bladder properly. Try to empty your bladder fully each time you go to the toilet, to help prevent bacterial infection.

Bacterial infection can also happen when bacteria from the anus are transferred to the urethra. This is more common in women than in men, as the urethra is closer to the anus in women than it is in men.

Symptoms

The symptoms of mild cystitis usually clear up without treatment within a few days:

- pain
- burning or stinging when passing water
- needing to urinate often and urgently but passing only small amounts of urine
- urine that's dark, cloudy or strong smelling
- traces of blood in urine
- pain in the lower back or abdomen
- feeling unwell, weak or feverish

Treatment

Cystitis is usually treated easily.

Children and men must see their GP if they have cystitis symptoms. Women are advised see their GP the first time

they have cystitis symptoms, and also if they have the condition more than three times in one year.

There are some self-help treatments that can ease the discomfort of any symptoms, or the GP may prescribe antibiotics. Painkillers purchased from the chemist such as paracetamol and ibuprofen can help manage any discomfort. However, the appropriate advice should be obtained from the pharmacist prior to taking any medication, drinking plenty of water is recommended and refraining from sex is recommended during an episode of cystitis as this could make the problem worse.

It's easier for bacteria to affect your body when your immune system is low. Eating a balanced diet, rich in fruit and vegetables, can help to keep your immune system healthy and strong, and more able to fight off infections. Having a healthy diet is even more important if you're prone to getting cystitis.

Is it contagious?

Cystitis is not contagious and it can't be passed from person to person. However, cystitis is sometimes caused by irritation or bruising as a result of sexual intercourse however it is important to note that is not a sexually transmitted infection.