



URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS AND PREGNANCY

The normal physiological changes of pregnancy can increase your tendency to develop a urinary tract infection (UTI). As your baby and uterus grow they put increased pressure on your bladder, which prevents it from emptying completely when you urinate. Bacterial growth is more likely in this environment. During pregnancy your kidneys are working hard to filter your increased blood volume and are less resistant to infection. A bladder infection can spread up the urinary tract to the kidneys causing serious illness including fever, vomiting and respiratory distress. An untreated UTI in pregnancy can cause preterm labor, premature rupture of the membranes and/or a kidney infection (which must be treated with antibiotics). You are encouraged to follow the guidelines for prevention and let your midwife know immediately if you are experiencing signs or symptoms listed below. As some UTIs are asymptomatic, the urine screening done at each prenatal visit will help to identify any developing infections. While still in the early stage most UTIs can be resolved with simple home remedies. What you can do to prevent UTIs:

- Wear cotton underwear or no underwear
- Drink 8 – 10 glasses of water per day
- Drink pregnancy tea daily
- Take probiotic supplements (we recommend MegaFlora's MegaFood brand)
- Avoid sugar and processed foods
- Avoid holding your urine – pee when you feel the urge
- Remember to wipe from front to back (80 – 90% of UTIs are caused by E. coli from the rectum)
- Urinate soon after intercourse

Signs and symptoms of a UTI:

- Frequency or urgency of urination, often with very little urine released
- Burning pain with urination
- Cramps
- Lower abdominal pain
- Lower back ache
- Fever or fatigue

Self-help therapies for UTIs:

- Avoid all processed sugar in your diet
- Increase water consumption even more, up to a gallon or more per day
- Drink unsweetened cranberry juice (up to 8 glasses/day) or take Cranactin tablets (1-2 tabs every 3-4 hours) as the tannins in cranberry prevent bacteria from lodging in the bladder
- Take vitamin C (500 mg every 2-3 hours, up to 2000 mg/day) to acidify the urine and boost immunity
- Take D-Mannose ½ tsp every 2-3 hours, calling your midwife if you do not notice a decrease in symptoms within a day or two
- If symptoms increase or worsen, ask your midwife about further treatment