

Urine infections (UTIs) in pregnancy

A urine infection happens when bacteria (germs) get into the bladder.

Urine infections are very common in pregnancy. It is important to get treatment.

Important

Contact your GP, midwife, or obstetrician if you have any of the symptoms set out in this guide. You may need a course of antibiotics.

Symptoms of urine infections in pregnancy

Infection in the bladder (sometimes called 'cystitis')

Symptoms include:

- pain on passing urine (peeing)
- burning feeling when you pass urine
- passing urine more often
- blood in your urine
- smelly urine
- high temperature

Infection in the kidney (sometimes called 'pyelonephritis')

Symptoms include:

- high temperature
- pain in your lower back or side
- nausea and vomiting
- blood in your urine

No symptoms (sometimes called 'asymptomatic bacteriuria')

Sometimes, urine infections do not cause any symptoms when you are pregnant. This is one of the reasons that your urine is tested regularly during your [antenatal care](#).

If you have a urine infection with no symptoms, it will be found in one of your urine tests.

Risks of urine infections in pregnancy

If your urine infection isn't treated, it can make you feel very unwell. You may even need to go to hospital for treatment.

Untreated urine infections may also affect your pregnancy. They can cause early labour or affect the growth of your baby in the womb.

Causes of urine infections

Women are more likely to get urine infections than men. In women, the tube (urethra) that carries urine out of the bladder is shorter than in men. So it's easier for germs to get into a woman's bladder than a man's bladder.

Pregnant women are also more prone to getting urine infections due to:

- hormonal changes
- the pressure of your baby and womb on your bladder, which may prevent it from emptying properly when you pee

You can reduce your chances of getting a urine infection in pregnancy by:

- wiping yourself from front to back after going to the toilet or when you are washing your genital area
- emptying your bladder before and after sex
- going to the toilet as soon as you feel the urge to pee

Treating urine infections in pregnancy

Antibiotics

Always make sure your GP knows that you are pregnant. This is so they can prescribe an antibiotic that's safe for you and your baby. It's important to complete the course as directed.

⚠ Important

If you are in pain, your GP or pharmacist can tell you what painkillers you can take.

Fluids

Drink plenty of water. This will help to dilute your urine and may help ease your pain.

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