

A **urinary tract infection (UTI) during cancer treatment** is relatively common and can become **serious** if not treated promptly—especially if you're on **chemotherapy** or other **immunosuppressive** treatments. Here's what you need to know:

Why Cancer Patients Are at Higher Risk for UTIs

1. Weakened Immune System

- Chemotherapy, radiation, or immunotherapy can reduce your body's ability to fight off bacteria, making infections more likely and more severe.

2. Changes in Bladder or Urinary Tract

- **Radiation to the pelvis** (common in prostate, cervical, or bladder cancers) can inflame the bladder or urethra.
- **Catheters** or frequent medical procedures increase infection risk.
- Some cancer medications can **irritate the bladder** (e.g., cyclophosphamide).

3. Low White Blood Cell Counts (Neutropenia)

- Makes it harder for the body to respond to and fight off infections like UTIs.
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Common UTI Symptoms to Watch For

Even mild symptoms should be taken seriously. Symptoms include:

- Burning or pain when urinating
- Frequent or urgent need to urinate
- Lower abdominal or pelvic pain

- Cloudy, foul-smelling, or bloody urine
- **Fever or chills** (especially dangerous if you're neutropenic)

Important: Some patients with low immunity may NOT have typical symptoms. A **fever may be the only sign.**



When to Call Your Doctor

Call your oncology team **right away** if:

- You have any urinary symptoms **and** are on cancer treatment
 - Your temperature is $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ (38°C)
 - You feel unwell, confused, or weak
 - You're neutropenic (low white blood cells)
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How UTIs Are Treated During Cancer Treatment

- **Urine culture and analysis** to confirm infection
 - **Antibiotics** (oral or IV depending on severity)
 - **Hospitalization** if the infection spreads or if you're immunocompromised
 - **Temporary treatment delays** if needed
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Prevention Tips

- Drink plenty of fluids (unless restricted)

- Wipe front to back (for women)
 - Urinate regularly—don't “hold it”
 - Avoid irritating products like scented wipes or douches
 - Practice good hygiene, especially if using a catheter
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Would you like guidance on **home comfort tips** during a UTI or want help understanding how your **specific cancer treatment** increases UTI risk?