

Urinary Tract Infection During Pregnancy

A urinary tract infection (UTI), also called bladder infection, is a bacterial inflammation in the urinary tract. Pregnant women are at increased risk for UTI's starting in week 6 through week 24.

Why are UTI's more common during pregnancy? UTI's are more common during pregnancy because of changes in the urinary tract. The uterus sits directly on top of the bladder. As the uterus grows, its increased weight can block the drainage of urine from the bladder, causing an infection.

What are the signs and symptoms of UTI's? If you have a urinary tract infection, you may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain or burning (discomfort) when urinating
- The need to urinate more often than usual
- A feeling of urgency when you urinate
- Blood or mucus in the urine
- Cramps or pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Incontinence
- Urine that looks cloudy, smells foul or unusually strong
- Pain or pressure in the area of the bladder

How will the UTI affect my baby? If the UTI goes untreated, it may lead to a kidney infection. Kidney infections may cause early labor and low birth weight. If your doctor treats a urinary tract infection early and properly, the UTI will not cause harm to your baby.

How is a UTI treated? UTI's can be safely treated with antibiotics during pregnancy.

How can I prevent a UTI?

- Drink 6–8 glasses of water each day and cranberry juice regularly.
- Don't eat or drink fruit juices, caffeine, alcohol, and sugar.
- Take Vitamin C, Beta-carotene and Zinc to help fight infection.
- Develop a habit of urinating as soon as the need is felt and empty your bladder completely when you urinate.
- Urinate before and after intercourse.
- Avoid intercourse while you are being treated for an UTI.
- Avoid using strong soaps, douches, antiseptic creams, feminine hygiene sprays, and powders.
- Change underwear every day.