

# Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) Program

## Frequently Asked Questions for Residents and Families

You will be more successful with the UTI Program if your team provides information to residents and families. This resource can be used by health care providers at the long-term care homes (LTCHs) when consulting or meeting with friends and families of residents who have questions about a LTCH's approach to managing suspected UTIs.

This resource is part of Public Health Ontario's [UTI Program](#). For more information, please visit [www.publichealthontario.ca/UTI](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/UTI) or email [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca).

### Fast Facts

- Finding bacteria in the urine is common in the elderly and does not always cause problems or need treatment with antibiotics. Bacteria in the urine without symptoms of an infection is called asymptomatic bacteriuria which does not cause harm to residents.
- Antibiotics are often given to residents of long-term care homes who have asymptomatic bacteriuria, but antibiotics are not needed in these cases.
- Using antibiotics when not needed can lead to harms, such as side effects (e.g. rash), adverse drug interactions and *C. difficile* causing severe diarrhea.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What are the signs of a possible urinary tract infection?

When you have a urinary tract infection it may hurt or burn when you pass urine. It may be hard to urinate, or you may feel the need to urinate more often. You may have a fever or, less commonly, blood in your urine. You may have pain in your side, lower stomach or lower back.

#### What are NOT signs of a urinary tract infection?

Smelly or cloudy urine does not mean you have a urinary tract infection. Other medical problems may cause changes in your urine. Certain foods and medications may also cause changes in how your urine looks or smells. If you become disoriented, or you experience other behavioural changes, it does not always mean you have a urinary tract infection.

**How will a possible urinary tract infection be managed?**

When you have signs of a urinary tract infection, urine will be collected and sent to the laboratory for testing. Depending on your situation you may get antibiotics immediately or wait for the results of your urine test.

You will be closely monitored during this time. A period of “watchful waiting” is an appropriate step to take and will not cause you any serious issues. If you are found to have a urinary tract infection, then you will be given antibiotics.

**How can you help?**

Our goal is to ensure that families feel confident that residents will be actively monitored when there is a suspected UTI and we encourage you to continue to ask questions. Please support this program by using antibiotics only when deemed necessary by your doctor or nurse practitioner.

## Citation

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