

- Drink at least 50 ounces, or 1.5 liters, of water daily
- Urinate promptly when the urge arises
- Urinate soon after sex
- Women should ensure they wipe from front to back after urination

### Green Flags – All Clear

### What this means...

**If you:**

- Do not have problems urinating

- You are taking steps towards your urinary health. Good work!

**Keep up the great work!**

### Yellow Flags – Caution

### What this means...

**If you:**

- Have new urinary incontinence, dribbling urine
- Feel pain or burning when you urinate
- Have a fever, feel tired, or are shaky
- Feel you need to urinate often
- Feel pressure in your lower belly
- Have urine that smells bad, is cloudy, or reddish
- Feel pain in your back or side below the ribs

- You may have a urinary tract infection

Call your doctor, nurse, or home health nurse if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

**If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.**

### Red Flags—Stop and Think

### What this means...

**If you:**

- See red/bloody urine
- Feel nauseated or vomit
- Are unable to pass any urine
- Have mental changes or confusion
- Have a fever above 101 degrees
- Feel pain in the side, back, or groin

- You need to see a healthcare professional right

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: **CALL 9-1-1.**

**If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 9-1-1. Emergency!**

## UTI Fast Facts

- A urinary tract infection (UTI) means that bacteria got into the urinary tract. The urinary tract makes and stores urine and removes it from the body. Your kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra are all a part of the urinary system.
- Most infections are caused from bacteria that live in the colon and rectum.
- Infections of the bladder are called “cystitis.” Infections of the urethra are called “urethritis.” Infection in one or both kidneys is called “pyelonephritis,” or kidney infection.
- Urinary tract infections are more common in women. After menopause, the risk for recurrent infections increases. The bladder becomes less elastic with age and may not empty completely. Less estrogen caused by menopause also increase the risk of urinary tract infections in women.
- Sexual activity increases the likelihood of developing a UTI. It is important to urinate after sex.
- Poor personal hygiene (for instance, wiping from back to front) increases the chance of bowel bacteria entering your urinary tract.
- Diabetes and other diseases that impair your immune system—the body’s defense against germs—can increase the risk of UTIs. Other conditions may increase your risk of UTIs. 1. having bowel incontinence, 2. being immobile for a long period of time, 3. problems emptying your bladder completely, and 4. having kidney stones.
- In men, having an enlarged prostate that blocks the flow of urine can increase the risk of a UTI.
- Some people have a catheter (tube) placed during a hospital stay. This risk persists even after the catheter is removed.
- People who are unable to urinate on their own and use a tube (catheter) long-term have an increased risk of UTIs.
- Coffee, other forms of caffeine, alcohol, and dehydration can all aggravate the urinary tract.

## So, what can you do?

- Drink lots of fluids. Water is best. Try to drink 6–8 glasses a day (unless your health care provider tells you to limit fluids).
- Go to the bathroom when you have the urge to pass urine. Urinate frequently.
- Practice good hygiene before and after sexual activity.
- After using the toilet, always wipe from front to back. This is particularly important especially after a bowel movement.
- Wear cotton underwear and loose fitting clothing.
- If you are diabetic, keep your blood sugar under good control.
- Only use a catheter when indicated. It should be removed when it is no longer needed.
- If you are prescribed an antibiotic, make sure you take it for the number of days prescribed, even if your symptoms improve sooner.

## Southeast Washington Aging and Long Term Care

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