

## Fact Sheet

# Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

### What you need to know about a UTI

- A UTI is a bacterial infection in the urinary tract. Women are at the highest risk for a UTI. For men and women, the risk of a UTI is highest after age 50. Medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney problems put people at higher risk. Individuals who do not walk, do not complete personal care/toileting independently, have bowel incontinence or constipation, or use a urinary catheter (a tube to drain the bladder) are at higher risk for a UTI. People you support who take antipsychotic medication or have seizure activity may also be at increased risk. Frequent or recent sexual activity is an important risk factor for young women.
- Call the doctor and make an appointment for any of these signs or symptoms of a UTI:
  - ✓ A burning feeling when going to the bathroom
  - ✓ The need to pee, even when just finished urinating
  - ✓ Tiredness, the need to sleep a lot, and lack of energy
  - ✓ Cloudy, dark, bloody, or foul-smelling urine (pee)
  - ✓ Pain in the lower stomach or genital area
  - ✓ Pain in the back or side below the ribs
  - ✓ Fever or chills
  - ✓ Nausea and vomiting
- Follow the doctor's instructions for treatment of a UTI. Make sure the person you support:
  - ✓ Takes antibiotics as directed
  - ✓ Gets plenty of rest
  - ✓ Drinks lots of water and other fluids (eight or more 8 ounce glasses a day)
  - ✓ Urinates often
- You can help prevent a UTI. Make sure that the person you support and others who support him or her know what to do, including:
  - ✓ Drinking plenty of water and other fluids (eight or more 8 ounce glasses a day)
  - ✓ Going to the bathroom frequently
  - ✓ After a bowel movement, wiping the anal area from front to the back with toilet paper until clean
- There are extra steps for women can take to prevent a UTI. Make sure the women you support:
  - ✓ After urinating, wipe the urethral area with toilet paper to dry
  - ✓ Change sanitary pads or tampons often
  - ✓ Urinate before and after sexual activity
  - ✓ Take showers or plain baths and avoid bubble baths or other feminine products that have deodorants or perfumes
  - ✓ Keep genital area clean and dry
  - ✓ Wear underwear with a cotton crotch
- The earlier the UTI is diagnosed and treated, the faster the person will get better.