

## Self-treatment

- Drinking Cranberry juice. There is conflicting evidence about cranberry products preventing cystitis. A chemical in the cranberry product is thought to prevent certain bacteria from attaching to cells that line the bladder. Therefore, cranberry may help to prevent (rather than cure) cystitis.
- Drinking plenty of water. This may help flush out the infection, as well as being good for your health.
- Do not have sex until your cystitis has cleared up. Otherwise this could make the infection worse.

## Prevention

Although treatment of one episode of cystitis can be relatively straightforward it is better if you can try and prevent the infection from recurring.

Options to help prevent cystitis occurring includes:-

- Avoiding spermicide use
- Voiding immediately after having sex

- Taking low-dose antibiotic for 6 to 12 months
- Drink cranberry juice
- Wiping from 'front to back' when you go to the toilet
- Vaginal oestrogen cream or pessary in older women may be recommended by your doctor for 6-12 weeks.

For more information:

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Cystitis-Recurrent-Infections-in-Women.htm>

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## RECURRENT CYSTITIS

**Patient Information**

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## What is Recurrent Cystitis?

Cystitis means inflammation of the bladder. It may be caused by a urine infection. Recurrent cystitis is when you get this infection more than 3 times a year.

## How common is it?

About half of all women have at least one bout of cystitis and for many, only one or two bouts occur in their lifetime. Recurrent cystitis most commonly occurs in women in their late 20s and in women aged over 55. About 15% of sexually active women have a urine infection in a given year, but the frequency of recurrent cystitis varies widely among different women.

## What causes it?

Recurrent cystitis is attributable to both genetic and behavioural factors. Women with recurrent cystitis are more likely to have first-degree female relatives – sisters, mothers, daughters – who also experience recurrent cystitis.

Sexual activity and the use of spermicides for birth control are the two main behavioural reasons for cystitis. The commonest cause is bacteria entering the bladder through

its entrance (the urethra). This occurs because the entrances to the urethra, vagina and anus are very close together allowing easy access to the bladder. The commonest bacteria which cause cystitis are E coli; these are found in large quantities in the bowel where they do no harm.

In menopausal years, the dryness of the vagina make one more prone to this problem.

## How is it diagnosed?

Typical symptoms are pain when you pass urine and passing urine frequently. You may also have pain in your lower abdomen, and 10-20% of women see blood in their urine. Your urine may also become cloudy or smell offensive.

Fever is uncommon and usually suggests a different problem/condition. The doctor will ask for a sample of your urine, and will test it for the presence of bacteria.

If you have recurring symptoms of cystitis, you may be advised to have a cystoscopy + biopsy and a bladder test called urodynamics to rule out other problems.

## How is it treated?

If left untreated, 50% of women will be free from symptoms by 6 weeks. There are, however, many treatment options to treat the infection quickly.

## Antibiotics

This will usually be in the form of a tablet to be swallowed 2-4 times a day, for three days. For a more complicated case of cystitis, such as cystitis with another underlying infection, you may be given antibiotics for 5-10 days.

If your cystitis symptoms are only mild, your GP may prefer not to prescribe antibiotics to avoid 'antibiotic resistance'. This is when the bacteria that cause cystitis adapt and learn to survive despite the use of antibiotics. Over time, this means that the treatment becomes less effective.

- If your cystitis usually occurs after having sex, you may be given a prescription for antibiotics to take within two hours of having sex.
- If your cystitis is not related to having, **sex** you may be given a low-dose antibiotic daily to take for a trial period of 6-12 months

