Urinary tract infection: reference guide

Canadian-first source map and discussion notes for a primary-care visit. This is educational background, not a prescribing guide.

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General health information only. This guide does not diagnose a condition or replace an assessment by a qualified clinician.

Key distinctions

- Cystitis: symptomatic lower-tract infection limited to the bladder.
- Pyelonephritis or systemic UTI: symptoms suggest infection beyond the bladder or systemic illness.
- Recurrent UTI: commonly two symptomatic episodes in six months or three in one year; culture confirmation is important.
- Asymptomatic bacteriuria: bacteria without compatible urinary symptoms; treatment is usually limited to specific situations such as pregnancy or selected urologic procedures.

Stewardship reminders

- Test when symptoms and context make a result useful.
- Use local resistance data and prior cultures when selecting therapy.
- Review culture results and narrow or stop therapy when appropriate.
- Persistent or recurrent symptoms should prompt reassessment for other diagnoses or structural problems.

Limitations

International guidance is included for comparison only. Ontario formularies, pharmacist scope, laboratory availability and referral rules must be checked locally. No dose, diagnosis or patient-specific treatment is provided.

Source links

Canadian Urological Association recurrent UTI update: https://www.cua.org/sites/default/files/Professional-Development/GP%20SERIES/Update2024/rUTI_L.Campeau.pdf

Canadian Paediatric Society children's UTI stewardship statement: https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/management-urinary-tract-infections

HealthLink BC UTI in teenagers and adults: https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthwise/urinary-tract-infections-teenagers-and-adults

Public Health Ontario UTI Program: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Health-Topics/Antimicrobial-Stewardship/UTI-Program?tab=4

Choosing Wisely Canada pathology recommendations: https://choosingwiselycanada.org/recommendation/pathology/

Government of Canada urinary health guide: https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/health-support/women-diversity-health/health-guide/wdh-urinary-health-guide.html

Alberta Health Services recurrent UTI pathway: https://myhealth.alberta.ca/recurrent-uti-pathway/start-treatment-prevention-strategies

AUA/CUA/SUFU recurrent UTI guideline 2025: https://www.auanet.org/documents/Guidelines/PDF/2025%20Guidelines/rUTI%20Update/rUTI%202025%20Unabridged%20Final.pdf

CDC clinical overview of UTI: https://www.cdc.gov/uti/hcp/clinical-overview/

IDSA 2025 complicated UTI guideline: https://www.idsociety.org/~/link/bc125f1fa47a47b7913b884cd368e8a0.aspx

USPSTF asymptomatic bacteriuria recommendation:
https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/document/RecommendationStatementFinal/asymptomatic-bacteriuria-in-adults-screening

NICE lower UTI guideline NG109: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng109

EAU Guidelines on Urological Infections: https://uroweb.org/guidelines/urological-infections

NHS urinary tract infections: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis/

Harrison’s Principles of Internal Medicine, 22nd edition, chapter 140: https://accessmedicine.mhmedical.com/content.aspx?bookid=3541&sectionid=294614246