

View this article online at: patient.info/news-and-features/9-ways-to-get-rid-of-a-uti

9 ways to get rid of a UTI

Urinary tract infections – UTIs – aren't serious or life threatening, but they can be very uncomfortable and bothersome. Whether you're looking to clear up an existing infection or wanting to lower your chances of recurring UTIs, we've put together nine UTI home treatments, medications, and supplements that can help free you from UTI irritation.

How to get rid of a UTI

[Urinary tract infections](#) (UTIs) occur when micro-organisms like germs and bacteria find their way into your urinary tract – the system of organs and tubes that make and send out your pee – where they multiply and cause an infection.

Both men and women can get UTIs and the [causes can be different for both sexes](#). However, the risk is much higher in women – who have shorter urinary tracts than men so the bugs can get to the bladder quicker. This makes women more vulnerable to UTIs from sexual intercourse, the [menopause](#), and other causes.

If you believe you have the [symptoms of a UTI](#), you should see your doctor. They may prescribe antibiotics, which are generally considered the most effective UTI treatment.

This said, there are several other methods to help you get rid of a UTI – from the most effective medication to natural urine infection home remedies and lifestyle hacks. Some of these methods can also help to prevent UTIs if you often have them and the irritation and discomfort they bring.

Two experts share their recommendations for getting rid of UTIs. Alongside these methods, painkillers can also help to ease your pain temporarily.

Medical ways to treat or prevent UTIs

Antibiotics

Dr Paul Ettlinger, GP at [The London General Practice](#), explains that antibiotics are the main medical UTI treatment.

'Antibiotics can kill the bacteria causing the infection. The antibiotic prescribed to you will depend on the type of bacteria causing your UTI. Some are taken orally and some through IV - a needle or tube that's inserted into your vein.'

This is generally the most effective medicine for UTIs¹, but it's not always the right option for everyone. Your doctor could recommend that you wait to see if your UTI clears up without antibiotics, and likewise if a course fails to alleviate symptoms, you may be recommended to hospital for further tests.

For women - vaginal cream

This cream helps to prevent recurrent UTIs in postmenopausal women that are caused by a drop in their oestrogen hormone levels. It works by putting oestrogen onto the vagina, which in turn increases the presence of lactobacillus - a beneficial bacteria that helps prevent UTIs². If you are postmenopausal and feel the dryness could be causing this irritation then see your doctor. You can now buy topical oestrogen that you can rub on from your pharmacy.

For men - alpha blockers and Cialis

For men, UTIs may be caused by an [enlarged prostate](#). This common condition can make emptying your bladder more difficult, increasing the build-up of bacteria and the likelihood of UTIs.

Dr Ettlinger recommends [alpha blockers](#), which help bladder emptying and peeing by relaxing the muscles of the prostate gland and bladder neck. Alternatively, Cialis is a medication taken by mouth that increases blood flow to the prostate, in turn improving problems with peeing associated with an enlarged prostate. By making it easier for you to pee, it stops the build up of bacteria and can therefore help reduce the chances of getting a UTI.

Supplements to treat or prevent UTIs

D-mannose

Laura Southern, nutritional therapist at [London Gynaecology](#), suggests that supplements of D-mannose can be useful: "This is found naturally in cranberries and is a type of sugar that is thought to prevent E-coli - the most common UTI-causing bacteria - from taking a hold in the urinary tract. It's sold in a powdered or tablet form and the usual dose is about 1-2g per day."

She adds that small studies show that taking D-mannose may be just as effective as antibiotics in treating UTIs⁵. This makes D-mannose a promising alternative UTI treatment that does not increase your risk of [antimicrobial resistance](#). Many doctors are recommending these to their patients. As this is a sugar - those with diabetes or who are at risk of diabetes need to be careful - consult your doctor first before taking them.

Probiotics

To treat a recurring UTI problem, you could try [probiotic supplements](#). Studies of the urinary microbiome - the groups of healthy and harmful bacteria that live in the urinary tract - show there are significant differences between the bacteria found in people who get UTIs and those who don't³.

Laura Southern, nutritional therapist at [London Gynaecology](#), says that women may take probiotic supplements to help the right strains of bacteria grow in the vagina. "This can help the vaginal microbiome, ensure the pH is at the best level to prevent bacterial growth, and therefore help prevent UTIs."

Although a relatively new research area, there have been promising results for probiotics as a preventative method against recurring UTIs⁴, as well as a UTI treatment that can accelerate recovery time.

Which probiotic?

"When choosing a probiotic to help prevent UTIs, make sure it contains the Lactobacillus strains - look for names like Lactobacillus reuteri, Lactobacillus rhamanous, Lactobacillus gasseri, and check that they have been proven to reach the vagina alive," recommends Southern.

UTI home treatment

Hydration

One of the simplest home remedies for UTIs is to [drink lots of water](#) and stay hydrated so that you pee regularly throughout the day and don't feel thirsty. According to Dr Ettlenger, [dehydration](#) causes concentrated pee, and this can lead to bacteria build-up and infections such as UTIs.

Eating well

The weaker your immune system, the more at risk you are of UTIs. Southern explains what you can eat and avoid to help prevent UTIs:

"Include lots of brightly coloured fruits and vegetables and use a mix of cooking methods to maximise vitamin absorption. For example, a simple UTI home treatment could be adding fresh, dark-skinned berries at breakfast, eating an orange-vegetable soup at lunch, and then a lightly cooked stir-fry with lots of bright colour vegetables at dinner.

"Sugar, alcohol and ultra-processed foods can increase inflammation and this can make UTIs worse. Try and focus on a whole-food diet that's as unprocessed as possible."

Cranberries - reliable remedy?

Some people have reported that cranberry products, like cranberry juice and cranberry supplements, have helped to cure their UTIs or ease their symptoms. This home remedy is based on the fact that cranberries naturally contain D-mannose - a popular UTI supplement. However, Dr Ettlenger says that there isn't strong evidence to back up the healing qualities of cranberry products.

This said, if you are prone to recurring UTIs, cranberry products may help to prevent UTIs from happening. Again though, more research is needed, and doctors urge patients to consider the sugar content of these foods¹.

Peeing after sex

This is an important prevention tip for those who get recurrent UTIs. Peeing soon after sex helps to flush out any bacteria that was introduced during sexual intercourse. Women are more prone to intercourse-related UTIs than men because bacteria introduced to the vagina has a shorter path to travel to the urethra – the tube leading to your bladder.

Genital hygiene

While these won't clear up an existing infection on their own, getting into good hygiene habits can also help to prevent UTIs:

- When you go to the toilet, wiping from front to back.
- Go for a pee after sex.
- If you use [incontinence pads](#), change them regularly.
- In general, ensure your genital area is clean and dry.

Further reading

1. [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: Urinary-tract infections.](#)
2. [Rosenblum: Update in female hormonal therapy: what the urologist should know.](#)
3. [Akgul and Karakan: The role of probiotics in women with recurrent urinary tract infections.](#)
4. [Wirth and Moon: Do probiotics reduce the frequency of urinary tract infections in women?](#)
5. [Wagenlehner et al: Why d-mannose may be as efficient as antibiotics in the treatment of acute uncomplicated lower urinary tract infections.](#)

Disclaimer: This article is for information only and should not be used for the diagnosis or treatment of medical conditions. Egton Medical Information Systems Limited has used all reasonable care in compiling the information but makes no warranty as to its accuracy. Consult a doctor or other healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions. For details see our [conditions](#).

Authored by: Amberley Davis	Peer Reviewed by: Dr Krishna Vakharia, MRCGP	
Originally Published: 20/11/2023	Next review date: 13/10/2023	Document ID: doc_32200

View this article online at: patient.info/news-and-features/9-ways-to-get-rid-of-a-uti

Discuss 9 ways to get rid of a UTI and find more trusted resources at [Patient](#).



To find out more visit www.patientaccess.com
or download the app



Follow us

