URINARY TRACT INFECTION (UTI)

Description
Urinary tract infections in women are relatively common. Numerous bacteria are normally present around the urinary opening. Intimate contact via intercourse or oral-genital contact may also introduce bacteria. Intercourse may push these bacteria into the urethra and/or bladder, causing an infection. Bacteria may also be introduced from the vagina, the rectum, or other outside sources, including fingers or foreign objects.

Symptoms
- Frequent urination
- Pain or burning with urination
- Feeling of incomplete bladder emptying
- Urinary urgency
- Blood in urine

Treatment
Antibiotics are used to treat urinary tract infections. Completion of all medication as prescribed is essential.

1. If you have any signs of an allergic/adverse reaction, please stop taking the medication and seek a healthcare provider evaluation.
2. Avoid sexual intercourse until symptoms resolve.
3. You should notice improvement within 48 hours or sooner. If no improvement within 48 hours, please return or seek healthcare provider evaluation or seek healthcare evaluation immediately for fever, shaking, chills, nausea/vomiting or mid-back (“flank”) pain.

Urinary analgesics, which are available without a prescription at Student Health Center or at any pharmacy, may be helpful for the temporary relief of urinary pain but they do not kill bacteria. This type of medication will turn the urine bright orange. Increasing intake of water and other non-caffeinated beverages is also helpful for a UTI.

Prevention
The following health habits may help to prevent UTI’s:
- Urinate frequently, particularly right after intercourse. If you are only able to void a small quantity after intercourse drink 8 ounces of liquid so you will be able to void a larger quantity in 2-3 hours and hopefully flush out bacteria that was introduced into the urethra during intercourse.
- Observe good hygiene practices to avoid unnecessary contamination.
- Avoid local irritants such as bubble bath, harsh soaps, feminine hygiene sprays, douches, and deodorant tampons.
- Some studies show that acidifying the urine with cranberry juice, capsules or concentrate may help prevent a UTI. Vitamin C 500mg four times a day or one gram-sustained release two times a day may help.

Complications
- Frequent recurrences. This may occur with onset of sexual activity or new partner.
- Antibiotic prophylaxis may be indicated if more than three bladder infections occur in a 6 month period.
- Kidney infection (pyelonephritis) may occur from bacteria ascending from the bladder to the kidney. This complication is more serious; and symptoms include back pain, fever, chills, nausea and/or vomiting. If any of these symptoms occur, you need to be seen by a clinician immediately.