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The Urinary Tract

A natural perspective on UTIs and Kidney Health

The Burning Question—Why does it hurt when I pee?

By Dr. Brooke Azie-Rentz

Yes, many of us have run to the bathroom only to find that the urgency to urinate is nothing compared to the burning sensation that occurs as soon as we get there. So what is a urinary tract infection (UTI) and what causes it?

A UTI can happen anywhere from the kidneys to the bladder, with the former being much more dangerous. Symptoms include urgency and frequency, scant urine, burning with urination, fever, flank or lower abdominal pain and in some it can be nothing at all. Women are affected more than men due to anatomy, and in older women even more due to lack of hormones.

Here are some ways that you can prevent UTIs:

1. Use proper cleaning techniques after going to the bathroom (remember: front to back!)

2. Practice healthy sex habits. Go to the bathroom after having sex and make sure to remove any lubricants or spermicides from the skin. In addition, make sure to clean any toys regularly as suggested by the manufacturer.

3. When exercising make sure to wear 100% cotton underwear and change them as soon as exercise is completed. Cotton is better at wicking away moisture than silk/rayon blends.

4. Avoid hot tubs and bubble baths if you are prone to frequent UTIs

5. Take probiotics after any antibiotics

6. If you are menopausal, come in and talk to our doctors about the possibility of hormone replacement therapy.

Natural treatments if you suspect you have a UTI:

1. 100% pure cranberry juice, not cocktail! 8-16 oz per day minimum or cranberry pills

2. Avoid white things (bread, sugar, dairy, potatoes, etc)

3. Probiotics

4. Contact your ND for botanical/supplement treatment options

5. Biotherapeutic Drainage (learn more in the article by Dr. Shegeft!)

So, when should you come into the office and determine if you need additional treatment?

If you have a fever, low back pain, blood in the urine or the symptoms have persisted for more than 3 days despite home remedies. If the infection moves into your kidneys, this is not a good situation! It requires antibiotic therapy. Stop in or give us a call if you have other questions.



Eliminate Toxins and Treat UTIs with Biotherapeutic Drainage

By Dr. Mohammad Shegeft

Biotherapeutic Drainage is a gentle way to eliminate toxins by using the body's own physiological processes. It works on a cellular level, opening the emunctories, which include the liver, kidney, stomach, intestines, skin and lungs to allow for toxin discharge. This process helps support physiological functions, encouraging the body towards a state of equilibrium, allowing for elimination of toxins and innate physiological regulation.

Biotherapeutic Drainage is one of the most long lasting and effective ways of restoring health to the body. It is a modality that should be used in every case to address the underlying cause of disease and not just the symptoms.

In cases of urinary tract infections, it is very important to address all organs involved such as the kidneys, the urinary tract itself and the liver. This makes using UNDA numbers one of the best ways to treat the underlying cause of the infection and optimizing organ function. UNDA compounds, or UNDA numbers, utilize the therapeutic properties of plants to drive pure potentized material remedies intra-cellularly where they exert their enzymatic metabolic functions to remove and drain both endogenous and exogenous toxins from target organs. These specific UNDA numbers utilize the medicinal properties of herbs such as Uva Ursi, Juniper, Inula, Parsley, Shepherd's Purse and Barberry with homeopathics and minerals to support kidney function, decrease sensitivities in the urethral tract and well as decrease pain and burning with urination and frequent urges.

The medicinal properties of the herbs mentioned above and their use in treatment of urinary tract infection have well been studied and documented. Now with the use of Biotherapeutic Drainage and UNDA numbers, they are combined with homeopathics to optimize organ function and treat UTIs safely, naturally and effectively.

Recurrent UTI's and Kidney energy

By Nichole Santoro, LAc

Most women will experience a few UTI's over their lifetime. As with any illness, it is a signal our body is giving us to check in with our health and reconnect with our best intentions. With appropriate treatment and a healthy immune system it should be pretty easy to kick a bladder infection out of the body. However, when infections of the bladder are more persistent or become recurrent, indicating a deeper level of imbalance, the root of the issue must be more closely investigated. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), urogenital health is closely tied to the health of the entire kidney organ system.

A famous 16th century Chinese doctor named Zhang Jie Bin wrote: *"there are two kidneys, (kidney yin and yang), with the Gate of Vitality between them. The kidney is the organ of water and fire, the abode of yin and yang, the sea of essence, and it determines life and death."* The importance of this organ system to our essential health cannot be overstated! The TCM concept of the Kidney system can be understood in western terms to involve all physiological functions that include the kidney-urinary system plus the endocrine system, and especially the adrenal glands. TCM Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang involves the regulation of electrolyte balance of sodium and potassium, necessary for the circulation of bioelectrical energy throughout the body.

On a mental level, a robust and healthy kidney manifests as an inspiration to fulfill a life's purpose plus the will power and courage to achieve it. When the kidney is weak the mind is more easily swayed as fear and anxiety become prominent. Physically, a person can experience problems

with hormone and electrolyte balance which ultimately show as symptoms involving the urinary tract, reproductive hormones, low back pain, weakness in the knees and sleep disturbances.

Signs of weak Kidney energy should be considered with care, and one's lifestyle is the most important factor to consider and adjust. "Burning the candle at both ends" is the surest way to disrupt hormone balance and essentially weaken our vital force, called "ministerial fire", known as Ming Men in Chinese Medicine. The lifestyle shifts necessary to strengthen the kidneys and stoke our vital source of health are usually simple and profound yet the hardest to incorporate into our fast paced American lifestyles.

In order to strengthen Kidney Qi we must:

- Find the balance and moderation in all things.
- Make good quality sleep a priority!
- Do more relaxation exercises such as Tai Chi, Gentle Yoga & Meditation
- Engage in non-strenuous hobbies that involve concentration, like art, crafts, or even Sudoku or crossword puzzles
- Harmonize your diet to your constitution
- Include herbal tonics to cleanse and strengthen kidneys and promote longevity (*see our acupuncturist for the right formula for your body*)

All articles appearing here are written by practitioners at Alpine Integrated Medicine. AIM believes in the principle of "doctor as teacher", and are proud to provide a source of knowledge and information to our community.