

Urinary tract infection (UTI) - Recurrent

Overview

Recurrent UTI refers to getting at least 2 infections in six months or at least 3 infections in one year.

The episode of UTI must be confirmed with positive urine culture.

Is this common?

Recurrent UTI is one of the most common condition affecting mainly women.

It is estimated that around 50–60% of women will develop UTIs in their lifetimes and *Escherichia coli* is the most common organism that causes UTI.

Are they different types of UTI?

UTI can be divided into 2 board categories: Uncomplicated and complicated

Uncomplicated UTI is when the patient suffers from an *isolated episode* of UTI without any is one structural or functional abnormalities of the urinary tract.

Complicated UTI is when UTI occurs in patients with existing structural or functional abnormalities of the urinary tract such as urinary obstruction due to prostate, or in patients with injury to the spine.

Is recurrent UTI related to sex?

Yes. Sexual intercourse and the use of spermicide can be the cause of recurrent UTI especially in young and pre-menopausal women.

What are the other causes of recurrent UTI?

| Young and pre-menopausal women | Post-menopausal and elderly women |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Sexual intercourse | History of UTI before menopause |
| Use of spermicide | Urinary incontinence |
| A new sexual partner | Atrophic vaginitis due to oestrogen deficiency |
| A mother with a history of UTI | Increased post-void urine volume |
| History of UTI during childhood | Blood group antigen secretory status |
| Blood group antigen secretory status | |

Adapted from European Association of Urology (EAU) guidelines



Am I genetically at risk of getting recurrent UTI?

Yes, it is possible. The different blood groups secrete substances that may influence the availability of these receptors on the urothelial cells (cells on the surface of the bladder) thereby affecting bacterial adherence and the susceptibility to UTI.

The frequencies of secretor status in different ABO blood groups are 70.1% in group A, 67.8% in group B, 67.9% in group AB, and 88.3% in group O.

Hence blood group B and AB individuals are at risk of getting recurrent UTI.

Symptoms

- Discomfort passing urine
- Painful while passing urine (dysuria)
- Burning sensation while passing urine
- Blood in the urine (haematuria)
- Frequency and urgency
- Lower abdominal or flank pain associated with the urinary symptoms

When to see a doctor

You will need to see a doctor if you experience the abovementioned symptoms.

You will need to see a specialist if you experience recurrent UTI attacks.

