

Kidney Infections

Occurs when bacteria or other infectious organisms enter the kidneys and cause infection.

What to look for

- Continuous pain that usually begins in the back above the waist and spreads down into the groin.
- Rapidly rising fever
- Frequent urge to urinate, even though the bladder is empty.
- Cloudy or bloody urine.
- Severe nausea or vomiting.

Kidney infections cause the kidney to swell and become inflamed.

This ailment can be extremely dangerous and should always be treated. If they are left untreated, they can lead to permanent kidney damage or [blood poisoning](#).

Causes

Kidney infections are usually caused by the bacteria that reside in the large intestine. In a number of cases the infection starts in the bladder and spreads to the kidney.

The use of catheters can also increase the risk of kidney infections.

Your doctor may perform a urine/blood test on you to determine if you have an infection as well as the cause.

Traditional Treatment

If you suspect that you have a kidney infection, do not hesitate to seek immediate medical treatment; as delay in clearing the body of infection can lead to serious complications.

Usually antibiotics and bed rest are often all that is required to bring an acute kidney infection under control within 48 hours. Your physician will also ask you to drink large quantities of water to help flush out the bacteria from your urinary tract.

Only in rare cases are people hospitalised, usually to ensure that they get enough fluids and antibiotics.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Because kidney infections are so serious, most naturopaths will insist that you seek conventional medical care. If you decide to use alternative treatments in addition to conventional ones make sure you communicate to your doctor which supplements and herbs you are thinking of starting.

Dietary Considerations

Until you are cured of the infection, avoid foods that might irritate the urinary tract and put undue stress on the kidneys. Food to avoid are alcohol, coffee, salt, black tea, chocolate, carbonated beverages, citrus fruits, tomatoes, spicy foods, vinegar, artificial sweeteners, and sugar are all considered potential irritants.

Prevention

Because most kidney infections start in the bladder, prevention begins with keeping bacteria out of the entire urinary tract.

- Clean yourself thoroughly after using the toilet. Women should wipe from front to back to avoid spreading bacteria to the opening of the urethra.
- Urinate as soon as possible when you feel the urge and empty your bladder completely.
- Do not wear synthetic underwear that traps heat in the crutch area.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Drink cranberry juice every day. Research suggests that cranberries have properties that help fight off urinary tract infections. You may even wish to take cranberry tablets.

Women:

- Empty your bladder after intercourse to flush any bacteria
- If you use a diaphragm, make sure that it fits properly and only leave it in for the required time – no longer.
- Avoid using scented soaps, bubble baths, and vaginal deodorants.

When to seek further professional advice

- You have symptoms that lead you to think you have a kidney infection,
- You notice blood in your urine