

WellnessBuzz

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Get On Tract About Urinary Infections

When we get an episode of Urinary Tract Infection (UTI), we are usually given antibiotics in order and we will then be given a course of antibiotics. But beyond that, how much is really known about UTI and how to prevent it?

UTI afflicts both men and women and is the second most common type of infection in the body, accounting for about 8.1 million visits to health care providers each year. With UTI, painful urination is experienced. Sometimes, it may also come with a fever, and discomfort in the back (kidney area) or lower abdomen (bladder area).

Causes of UTI

UTI is caused by bacteria that have entered the urinary tract. Bacteria usually enter through the urethra, especially in women, who have a much shorter urethra than men. For women, the moist layer around the urethral opening provides a seal against the bacteria from entering the urethra. For men, the long length of the urethra itself acts as

There are also certain lifestyle factors and medical conditions that increase the risk of UTI in both men and women. These include:

1. **Sexual intercourse.** Bacteria may enter the urethra and from there into the bladder (and multiply) if the urine is not cleared in time. This explains why women often develop UTI after sexual intercourse.
2. **Urinary stones.** Bacteria can potentially lodge within the urinary stones, causing urine infection.
3. **Blockage of the urinary tract.** For example, due to stones and prostate enlargement in men, the urine cannot be cleared effectively, and this gives the bacteria an opportunity to multiply.
4. **Menopause.** Due to the lack of estrogen after menopause, the vaginal skin becomes thin and dry and vaginal pH rises, allowing harmful bacteria to establish themselves.
5. **Inadequately treated UTI.** Sometimes the infections recur because the bacteria have not been totally eradicated and eventually multiply again.
6. **Conditions that decrease the body's resistance to infection.** These include diabetes mellitus and long term use of steroids.





Article contributed by

Dr Ng Chee Kwan

MBS (Singapore), FRCS (Edin),
FRCS (Surg), FAMS (Urology)
Consultant Urologist,
United Specialist Centre

Novena Medical Center

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Getting Tested

In all suspected cases, the urine should be tested for the presence of infection. The urine sample should be collected from the mid portion of the urine stream, to avoid any contamination from skin cells. This is then rapidly tested for signs of infection through a special test strip. In straightforward cases where the urine dipstick gives a positive result, treatment can be started immediately.

The urine can also be sent for detailed microscopic analysis, to confirm the presence of white blood cells in the urine and also for urine culture, to see the type of bacteria that is causing the infection. This usually takes two to three days and the results of the culture will help the doctor to prescribe suitable antibiotics.

However, for more serious cases of UTI (e.g. recurring infections and those that affect the kidney), further evaluation by a urologist is recommended.

The methods of investigations include:

1. **Ultrasound of the kidneys and bladder.** A non-invasive and safe way of examining the kidneys and bladder for the presence of abnormalities.
2. **CT scan or intravenous urogram.** To further investigate the upper portion of the urinary tract during these tests, patients are given an intravenous injection so that the urinary system can be seen clearly.
3. **Flexible cystoscopy.** A fine flexible endoscope is inserted through the urethra into the bladder, and the lining of the bladder is closely examined for any problems. This can be done under local anaesthesia.

The Road to Recovery

Once the diagnosis of UTI is made, you will be prescribed a course of antibiotics. A three-day course of antibiotics may be enough for an uncomplicated case of cystitis, but if the infection is more serious, a longer course of up to three weeks may be necessary. Upon recovery, it is sometimes useful to repeat the urine tests again to make sure that the infection has been eradicated.

Sometimes, treatment with probiotics (supplements containing beneficial bacterial) may help to prevent UTI from recurring. If the UTI is due to menopausal changes, it may be helpful to use a topical oestrogen cream. You should only start these treatments upon doctor's advice, as there is potential for side-effects.

If the UTI is caused by urinary stones, or blockage within the urinary tract (e.g. due to enlarged prostate in men), it should be treated by a urologist.

Treatment and screening services for UTI are available at the United Specialist Centre at Novena Medical Center.

Dr Ng Chee Kwan obtained his medical degree from the National University of Singapore in 1994 and later completed his Advanced Surgical Training in Urology in 2004. He has extensive experience in minimally invasive urological procedures with subspecialty interests in surgery for urological cancers; laparoscopic (keyhole), robotic and single port surgeries; as well as treatment of prostate problems and overactive bladder.

DR NG'S UTI PREVENTION TIPS

Unload, stay hydrated and clean up!

1. Empty the bladder after sexual intercourse to reduce the risk of bacterial infection.
2. Keep the body hydrated by drinking at least 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day.
3. Empty the bladder regularly (i.e. every two to three hours), and avoid holding urine for prolonged periods.
4. When washing or wiping the private areas, wipe the genital areas first before the anus.

Cranberry juice has also been known to be helpful, as it prevents harmful bacteria from attaching themselves to the urinary tract lining.

Note: If the UTI is caused by urinary stones, or blockage within the urinary tract (e.g. due to enlarged prostate in men), it should be treated by a urologist.





Article contributed by

Natalie Lim

M.Ed. Counselling Psychology
Psychologist
Psych and Psych Consultants

Novena Medical Center

Beating The Blues

Recent studies have shown that approximately one in 10 people in Singapore suffer from mental disorder. Many of these cases often involve depression and anxiety. But do we really know how to cope with the blues when it hits?

People with depression, often feel sad, worthless and hopeless. The loss of self-esteem and confidence can significantly affect their performance at work and in school. They also suffer from excessive worries and fears, which are often thought of as psychological symptoms. These symptoms can be debilitating and are frequently diagnosed as mental disorders.

Causes of Depression

Mental disorders frequently co-exist with physical illness. Patients with diabetes, hypertension and other chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of developing depression which can affect the course and prognosis of their medical illness. Scientific studies have also shown that depression increases the risk of acute heart attack and the mortality rates that follow.

Many cancer patients and their families face some degree of depression, anxiety and fear. The thought of whether they are able to fulfill family or work roles, the loss of control and body image changes, as well as the fear of death, suffering and pain frequently besiege patients who have been diagnosed with cancer. These symptoms of depression and anxiety could ultimately affect the treatment of cancer and its results. Family members may also suffer from depression due to the fear of losing their loved one.



Stepping in the Right Direction

It is important to recognise the symptoms of depression and anxiety in patients with physical illnesses. Patients are encouraged (but not forced) to share their feelings and experiences with their doctors and loved ones. They should be gently reminded that it is "okay" and normal to feel sad and frustrated at times. However, if the symptoms persist or worsen and interfere with their lives and functioning, a psychological assessment may be useful.

Psychological treatments are available at Psych & Psych Consultants Pte Ltd at the Novena Medical Center to help people manage their physical, emotional and psychological symptoms. These include providing support and counselling for patients and their families, as well as specific psychological therapy to resolve issues such as depression, anxiety and pain management.

Ms Natalie Lim is a Psychologist at Psych and Psych Consultants. She is a full member and a registered psychologist with the Singapore Psychological Society (SPS) and an Associate Member with the American Psychological Association (APA). She has been working with children, adolescents and adults over her years of psychology practice and administers treatments such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), IQ testing and autism screening, among others.

Combat Your Bowel Woes

Traditionally, functional defaecatory disorders (FDD) such as constipation and faecal incontinence are often overlooked and left untreated. Patients can now undergo a comprehensive Anorectal Physiology Measurement (ARM) for accurate diagnosis and treatment.

Understanding Bowel Problems

It is common to have bowel problems occasionally but not all the time. Types of constipation include slow-transit constipation, the unusually slow passage of waste as a result of weak colonic muscles, and dys-synergic defaecation, where the stool is blocked from passing through the anus. Both conditions can co-exist and cause a severe form of constipation. Dys-synergic defaecation is very common and usually leads to excessive straining during defaecation, causing haemorrhoids, anal fissures or rectal prolapse. Bowel incontinence is a condition in which a patient experiences loss of bowel control. Its causes vary and are often difficult to diagnose clinically.

Dr Lim Jit Fong is an expert in treating patients with FDD. He has been instrumental in forming the Pelvic Floor Disorder Services at Singapore General Hospital, where he served as its Founding Director before he joined Novena Colorectal Centre.

The ARM Solution

The Novena Colorectal Centre is the first private medical centre in Singapore with a fully-equipped investigative laboratory to diagnose FDD. This involves the use of the Anorectal Physiology Measurement (ARM) that provides information on the anal muscles and nerves, anal muscle contractions, and the coordination of various muscles involved during bowel movement. Treatments for FDD often involve counselling on dietary and lifestyle adjustments, pelvic floor physiotherapy and medication. More severe cases may require surgery.



Article contributed by

Dr Lim Jit Fong
MBBS (Singapore), FRCS (Glasg), FAMS
Senior Consultant Surgeon
Novena Colorectal Centre

Genetic Testing For Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in Singapore and genetic inheritance has been identified as a possible cause. Up to 30% of all such cancers exhibit some degree of familial inheritance. Colonoscopy and x-ray examinations are among the existing diagnostic tests, but they are unable to predict one's risk of hereditary cancers. Managing hereditary colorectal cancer is now possible with predictive genetic testing.

Know Your Risks, Get Tested!

You should consider genetic testing if:

1. There are three or more colorectal cancer cases across two or more generations, particularly if one of the affected is your immediate family member.
2. There is a personal or family history of colorectal cancer diagnosed before 50 years of age.
3. There are multiple polyps found in your colon, rectum or anywhere within your gastrointestinal tract.
4. You are from a family known to have hereditary conditions such as:

- a. Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP)
- b. Lynch Syndrome (LS)
- c. Puetz-Jegher's Syndrome (PJS)
- d. Cowden Syndrome (CS)

5. Your physician believes that colorectal cancer could run in your family.

The Procedure

An integrated genetic testing service for colorectal cancer is available at the Novena Colorectal Centre. Your medical and family histories will be assessed through a detailed clinical consultation and blood sample analysis. In some cases, family members may be screened to affirm the results.

Dr Koh Poh Koon is part of the clinical specialist team at the Novena Colorectal Centre, with a specialised interest in the clinical management and surgical treatment of hereditary colorectal cancers. He was awarded a second HMDP Scholarship in 2010 to pursue further training at the Genomic Medicine Institute, Cleveland Clinic (Ohio), USA, and had served as the founding Director of the Colorectal Cancer Genomic Health Service at the Singapore General Hospital.



Article contributed by

Dr Koh Poh Koon
MBBS (Singapore), MMed (Surg),
MRCSEd
FRCSE (Glasg), FAMS
Senior Consultant Surgeon
Novena Colorectal Centre

The following clinics are just three that are available at the Novena Medical Center and Novena Specialist Center. To look for a specific healthcare and medical specialist, please refer to the directory listed at the back of this booklet.



United Specialist Centre

Established in 2008, United Specialist Centre has expanded from an initial 800 sq ft floor area to the present 1400 sq ft location at the Novena Medical Center. It comprises a group of 12 specialists that cover a broad range of disciplines which include urology, general surgery, colorectal surgery, as well as orthopaedic surgery with orthopaedic oncology and pain service. To provide convenience and quality medical care to patients, the centre also has a comprehensive range of paramedical services including physiotherapy, psychological counselling and nutritional advice.

United Specialist Centre

10 Sinaran Drive

#09-07/08 Novena Medical Center

Phone: +65 63977077 Email: unitedspecialist@gmail.com

Website: www.unitedspecialist.com



Psych and Psych Consultants

Psych and Psych Consultants provides psychological treatment plans that are tailored to resolve patients' emotional and psychological difficulties based on their individual needs. Treatment options include psychological therapy and counselling for children, adults, as well as specialised programmes to help couples and family with psychological and emotional issues.

Psych & Psych Consultants Pte Ltd

10 Sinaran Drive

#10-25 Novena Medical Center

Phone: +65 63976554

Email: info@psychnpysch.com

Website: www.psychnpysch.com



Novena Colorectal Centre

The Novena Colorectal Centre is the first colorectal centre launched by Fortis Healthcare Singapore. Located at Novena Specialist Center, it is the first medical centre in Singapore to introduce the video assisted anal fistula treatment (VAAFT). Also available at the centre is an integrated genetic testing service for the management of hereditary colorectal cancer.

Novena Colorectal Centre

8 Sinaran Drive

#05-07/08 Novena Specialist Center

Phone: +65 63610230

Email: enquiry@novenacolorectal.com

Website: www.novenacolorectal.com

NOVENA Medical Center

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

A Life Clinic
General Practice
#11-20
Tel: +65 67372283

About Braces Dental Surgery
Dentistry
#10-21
Tel: +65 63977177

Advance Renal Therapy
Renal Medicine & Kidney Dialysis
#11-14
Tel: +65 63976468

Ageless Revival Medical Centre
General Practice with Aesthetic Services
#10-31
Tel: +65 63976878

Amplulatory SurgiCare
General Surgery
#09-01
Tel: +65 63976979

American International Clinic
Internal Medicine
#10-10
Tel: +65 63977129

Braces & Aesthetics Dental Clinic
Dentistry
#10-36
Tel: +65 67322706

Centre for Ear Nose Throat Allergy & Sleep
ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat)
#11-23
Tel: +65 65860988

Centre for Hands & Reconstructive
Microsurgery (Novena) Pte Ltd
Hand Surgery
#11-17
Tel: +65 63976850

ClearSK™ Medi-Aesthetics Clinic (Novena)
Aesthetic Services & Wellness Care
#10-01
Tel: +65 63977250

Clinic 10
Preventive Healthcare
#09-31
Tel: +65 63360504

Compass Medical Group
Health Screening
#10-28
Tel: +65 66353525

Cozy Dental Group
Dentistry
#08-15/16
Tel: +65 63976566

CSK Novena Laser Aesthetic Clinic
Aesthetic Services & Wellness Care
#10-26
Tel: +65 63977060

Dr Robby Marcou Developmental and
Behavioural Paediatric Clinic
Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics
#10-12
Tel: +65 63976637

Executive Health Screeners
Health Screening
#08-17
Tel: +65 63977248

Fema Clinic & Surgery
Medical Clinic
#09-01
Tel: +65 68543720

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

Healthway Medical Assessment Centre
Wellness Care
#10-06
Tel: +65 62382190

H L Kong Medical Oncology Centre
Medical Oncology
#11-08
Tel: +65 63977123

K O Chan Ear Nose Throat Sinus & Sleep
Centre
ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat)
#10-11
Tel: +65 63976454

Lifesource Medical Centre
Aesthetic & Regenerative Medicine
#11-16
Tel: +65 63976080

Lim K.A. Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Oral & Maxillofacial
#09-25
Tel: +65 62353688

Loke Skin Clinic
Dermatology
#09-13
Tel: +65 63374926

LQ Dental Centre
Dentistry
#11-10
Tel: +65 65380890

Medfast Medical Centre
Health Screening
#11-27
Tel: +65 62223373

NHC Medical Centre (Novena)
General Practitioner
#09-10
Tel: +65 63976568

Naaman Skin and Laser Centre
Dermatology
#09-27
Tel: +65 63972833

Neuglow The Aesthetics Doctors
Aesthetic Services
#10-35
Tel: +65 63972552

Nihon Premium Clinic
Japanese Medical & Specialists HealthCare
#11-12
Tel: +65 63972002

Nobel Psychological Wellness
Psychiatry
#09-35
Tel: +65 63972993

Noel Leong Fertility and IVF
IVF Obstetrics and Gynaecology
#09-14
Tel: +65 62556883

Novena Children Clinic
Paediatric Medicine
#10-32
Tel: +65 63976960

Novena Dental Aesthetic Practice Pte Ltd
Dentistry
#09-34
Tel: +65 63977097

Novena Heart Centre
Cardiology & Cardiothoracic Surgery
#09-05
Tel: +65 63972004

DIRECTORY OF SERVICES

Medical specialists. Nurses. Allied health professionals.
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CLINIC / SPECIALTY

Novena Medical Center Family Clinic
General Practice
#15-19
Tel: +65 63977318

Novena Medical Screening Centre
Health Screening
#08-33
Tel: +65 66322770

Novena Psychiatry Clinic
Psychiatry
#10-18
Tel: +65 63972688

Novena Surgery
Day Surgery
#08-18
Tel: +65 63079956

Orthodontic Dental Practice LLP
Dentistry
#09-29
Tel: +65 63976880

Parkway Laboratory Services Ltd
Medical Lab Testing
#08-01
Tel: +65 63976930

Preventive Centre Pte Ltd
Preventive Healthcare
#09-24
Tel: +65 63338489

Profile Dental Surgery Pte Ltd
Oral / General Dentistry
#09-32
Tel: +65 63386806

Psych & Psych Consultants Pte Ltd
Psychological Services
#10-25
Tel: +65 63976554

Radiologic Clinic
X-Ray Services
#08-02
Tel: +65 63976886

Roots! Advanced Endodontics
Endodontics
#15-32
Tel: +65 63972939

Singapore Aesthetic Centre
Aesthetic Services
#08-12
Tel: +65 68371000

Singapore Lipo, Body & Face Centre
Aesthetic Services
#08-05
Tel: +65 67361000

Singapore Sports Medicine Centre
Sports Medicine
#08-08
Tel: +65 67371000

Smile Avenue Dentistry Pte Ltd
Orthodontics
#15-18
Tel: +65 63972818

Smile Makers Dental Clinic
Dentistry
#09-26
Tel: +65 63972719

Soon Diabetes Thyroid and Endocrinology
Clinic
Endocrinology
#10-08
Tel: +65 63977101

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

Specialist Eye & Eyelids Centre
Ophthalmology
#09-11
Tel: +65 63976901

Specialist Oral Surgeons
Oral & Maxillofacial
#09-25
Tel: +65 63976638

SportsMed Central
Sports Medicine
#10-13
Tel: +65 64796822

Stellar Medical Aesthetic Clinic
Aesthetic Services
#11-31
Tel: +65 63972722

The Head & Neck Surgery Centre
ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat)
#11-02
Tel: +65 63977926

The Oral Care Centre
Dentistry
#10-12/29
Tel: +65 63976990

The Plastic Surgery Practice
Plastic Surgery
#11-33
Tel: +65 63976618

The Rafflesian Clinic & Surgery
Medical & Aesthetic Services
#11-06
Tel: +65 63382740

The Revival Medical Centre
General Aesthetic & Regenerative
Medicine
#10-16
Tel: +65 63972472

The Sloane Clinic Plastic Surgery Centre
Plastic Surgery
#08-35
Tel: +65 63976848

Thomson Lifestyle Centre
Wellness Care
#10-14
Tel: +65 63526550

Thomson Paediatric Centre
Paediatric Medicine
#09-02
Tel: +65 62563291

Thomson Specialist Skin Centre
Dermatology
#10-05
Tel: +65 63976006

Thomson Women Cancer Centre
Breast, Colorectal & Gynaecology
#09-15
Tel: +65 65918218

United Specialist Centre
Multi-Disciplinary Medical Services,
Physiotherapy and Podiatry Services
#09-07/08
Tel: +65 63977077

Winslow Clinic
Psychiatry
#09-23
Tel: +65 63977309

Yap & Ang Surgical Associates
General & Plastic Surgery
#11-03
Tel: +65 68368238

NOVENA Specialist Center

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

Centre For Assisted Reproduction Pte Ltd
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
#05-05/6
Tel: +65 66596638

Medical Associates Centre
General Practitioner
#04-06
Tel: +65 62351062

Novena Colorectal Centre
Colorectal Surgery/Gastrointestinal
Endoscopy
#05-07/08
Tel: +65 63610230

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

Poon & Phay Dental Surgeons Pte Ltd
Prosthodontics/Periodontics
#05-01
Tel: +65 63363623

Sincere IVF Center Pte Ltd
Fertility
#06-09/10/11
Tel: +65 65070766

Sincere Medical Specialist Center For Women
Obstetrics & Gynaecology/Fertility/Breast
Surgery/Cosmetic/Plastic Surgery/Health
Screening
#06-08/16/17/18/19
Tel: +65 65070766

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

The Resilienz Mind Psychological Medicine
and Counselling Centre Pte Ltd
Psychiatry
#04-01
Tel: +65 66596830

Thomson Dental Centre
General Dentistry
#07-08/16/17/18/19
Tel: +65 62550770

Thomson Dental Surgeons
General Dentistry/Orthodontics/Endodontics/
Periodontology
#05-12/13
Tel: +65 67379831

CLINIC / SPECIALTY

Thomson Fertility Centre Pte Ltd
IVF (In-Vitro Fertilisation)/Obstetrics &
Gynaecology
#07-02/3/4/5/6/7
Tel: +65 62527766

Thomson Specialist Dentistry
Orthodontics/Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons
#07-08/16/17/18/19
Tel: +65 62550770

Tucker Medical
Medical Oncology & General Medicine
#04-03
Tel: +65 66596918

8, Sinaran Drive, Singapore 307470 | Tel +65 66596561 | www.novenaspecialistcenter.com