

Women's Urology

What You Should Know



Women often put the health of their families ahead of their own. It is of great value to take care of your own health, including your urologic health. There are many things you can do to prevent urologic conditions such as kidney stones and urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Here are some healthy living tips that can improve your urologic health:

Drink water. Drinking 10 or more cups of water daily can prevent kidney stones and reduce the risk of UTIs.

Go often. Try to pass urine every 3-4 hours to lower your chance of UTIs and urine leakage. Also, urinate after intercourse. A soft daily bowel movement can help prevent bladder symptoms like pain, frequency, urgency, leakage and UTIs.

Keep clean. To avoid UTIs, wipe from the front to the back after you use the bathroom.

Weight matters. Keeping a healthy weight can lower your risk of kidney stones and urinary leakage as well as overactive bladder (OAB).

Eat healthy. Try to limit caffeine, alcohol and spicy/acidic foods. They can irritate the bladder. High sodium and high animal protein (beef, chicken, fish and pork) raise the risk of kidney stones. Talk to your doctor about how much calcium you should get every day. High or low amounts of calcium may raise the risk of kidney stones.

Get exercise. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least five days a week.

Don't smoke. Smoking raises the risk of these urologic conditions:

- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Kidney stones
- Painful bladder syndrome
- Urine leakage

There are steps you can take at every age to improve your urologic wellness:

- **Ages 18-30:** Find out if you have a family history of bladder or kidney cancer. See a gynecologist for routine exams and follow safe sexual practices. This age group can be at greater risk of UTIs from sexual intercourse. If this happens, get help from your doctor.
- **Ages 30-50:** Maintain healthy blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels to reduce the risk of kidney disease.
- **Ages 50-70+:** Look for changes in bathroom breaks like urgency (feeling the urgent need to pass urine as if you can't wait), frequency (the need to pass urine often, about every one to two hours), leakage or nighttime urination. Many of these are linked to changes in estrogen as women go through menopause. Lower estrogen levels can also lead to vaginal dryness, pain with sex and recurrent UTIs. Talk with your doctor about whether vaginal estrogen cream can help.

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Call the doctor if you have:

- **Blood in urine.** Blood may appear as red, brown or tea-colored urine. It may be a sign of a larger problem. Even if it goes away or isn't painful, be sure to let your doctor know.
- **Leaking.** Leaking urine is something that can be helped, often with non-surgical therapies. These include lifestyle changes, physical therapy and medicines.
- **Vaginal bulge.** Feeling a vaginal bulge or as if tissue is protruding from your vagina is a common and treatable condition.
- **Pain.** Pain that doesn't go away in the pelvis, genitals, side, abdomen, back or when you urinate.

About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts. To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions** or go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

Disclaimer

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or healthcare provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications. For more information, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Download** or call 800-828-7866.