“I want to pee but I cannot” – Does this seem like I am describing your state when you have the oh-so-dreaded Urinary Tract Infection? Has this too become your monthly companion like Aunt Flo? Well, while you better embrace your menstrual cycles with an open heart, let me tell you that you don’t have to do that with your recurring bladder infections.

Although they say that some women are just genetically more prone to the infections, you could still make a self-analysis of your habits and find out what you could do to stop this unnecessary misery. Read further if you want to get to the roots of the problem and then nip it at the bud when it comes knocking your door the next time!

What Is A UTI?

Basics first – What is UTI? A bacterial infection anywhere in the urinary tract caused primarily by Escherichia coli, nicknamed E.coli in the scientific community, can be broadly referred to as a Urinary Tract Infection. This could mean there’s a culture of these bacteria either in your ureters, urethra, urinary bladder, and worse still in the kidneys.
The gateway of this bacterium is the anus where E.coli usually thrives. Owing to the biological make-up of the female urinogenital body part, the urethra is shorter than in males (4cm in females and 12 in males) and before you know what is happening, the bacteria is in your insides doing all sorts of things they aren’t supposed to. They cling vehemently to the walls of the urinary tract, multiply at a great speed and sit there until an antibiotic or an agent that acts similar to it kills or renders it powerless.

How Do You Know It Is A UTI – A Review Of Its Symptoms

Well, most women know what it is and what it feels like. So, I am sure you know that it definitely is a UTI. However, most UTI episodes vary in nature and symptoms from woman to woman, and in fact, episode to episode in the same woman. To extirpate any ambiguity regarding UTI symptoms in women, whenever in doubt, check this list – UTI Symptoms.

- Needing to urinate frequently in spite of which you feel your bladder is not completely empty.
- Inability to urinate at all even when there is a persistent sensation to urinate
- Burning and stinging sensation while urinating
- Inability to hold the urine until you reach the bathroom – urinary incontinence.
- Abdominal, pelvic, and lower back pain which could be spasmodic.
- In some cases, there could be a change in the colour of the urine – dark or even cloudy appearance.
- There could also be blood in the urine, and in that case it is important you see the doctor without delay.
- Inflammation and infection might also cause fever.

What Causes A Urinary Tract Infection? And Why You Should Stop Making These Mistakes Right Away?

So, now that you are sure it is a Urinary Tract Infection, don’t miss out on the causes (I know you want to jump to the ‘home remedy’ section but this is something you should know if you have recurring UTIs. You never know, this could be your last one!)

*E. coli*- That is the one-word answer for that question. However, how does this bacteria end up inside the urinary tract? That’s for you to figure out while I can just give you a list of possible ways it could have reached inside.
The most common cause is you have the habit of wiping your anus from back to front. It is exactly around the anus that these bacteria live and wiping towards your vagina allows it to enter your vagina and then completely into the urinary tract.

**Solution**- Simple, always make sure you wipe your anus from front to back after you poop or pee.

2. You aren’t washing after sex Penetrative intercourse is another major reason the E.coli could be getting into your insides for obvious reasons. The mechanism is quite similar to that of wrong method of wiping except for the fact that it is happening because of your partner’s penetration.

**Solution(s)**-
- Washing your genitals before and after intercourse is a good way of dealing with this problem.
- Plus, refraining from penetrative sex during the period of infection is better because this might aggravate the inflammation in the vaginal walls. However a UTI caused by E.coli is not contagious unless it is because of an STD. So if the girl is up to it (which definitely is not going to be the case owing to the pain and burning) you can have sex and the infection is not going to spread to the partner.
- One more thing you could do to prevent a UTI caused by sex is to urinate every time you’ve had sex. Any bacteria that could have possibly entered the urethra will be washed off when you pee!

3. You have a bad habit of not urinating as soon as you feel like it. Holding the urine for long hours and avoiding to pee worsens the infection because the urine sits inside the urethra and causes the bacteria to multiply at a faster pace.

**Solution**- Urinate the moment you have the urge. Holding on is common in young girls and it is important for mothers and caregivers to teach children to urinate frequently.

4. You don’t drink enough water and do not urinate frequently. By doing so, you are allowing the bacteria that have entered into your urinary tract to stay for a longer time. If there are conducive pH levels, the bacteria are going to quickly multiply and even spread to deeper parts of the urinary tract.
Solution- obviously, drink enough water. Staying hydrated is going to make you pee sufficient number of times. This is like an automated ‘flush’ button where you kick the bacteria out.

5. You use a western-style commode and don’t have the habit of squatting to pee. This style of urinating is inefficient when it comes to expelling bacteria while peeing. Plus, the bladder doesn’t get completely empty. The urine stagnates in the bladder and encourages bacterial multiplication.
Solution- Although, it might sound queer, the Indian style bathrooms definitely have a point. Squatting to pee makes it easier to empty your bladder completely. The force with which you urinate is much stronger and helps in effective flushing out of the bacteria. If you don’t have an Indian-style bathroom, you could widen your legs apart and slightly bend your knees while peeing. Of course, if this is not how you would prefer to pee but would still like to avoid infections, you could consider using the funnel-like devices available in the market that will help you urinate in a standing position.

6. You aren’t using the right kind of underwear or maintaining panty-hygiene. This is only going to provide more favourable conditions like lack of air circulation and constant moist environment for the bacteria to breed.
Solution- To avoid bacterial bladder infections, replace all synthetic underwear with breathable fabrics like soft cotton. This will allow more air to reach your vagina, thereby curbing the anaerobic respiration and eventual multiplication of E. coli. Also, synthetic fabrics don’t absorb moisture well, and since the vagina is a moist organ, wearing cotton is a prudent idea to avoid persistent presence of moisture.

7. You either are a diabetic or just have the habit of indulging too much in eating sugary foods. Increased the sugar level in the body is going to reflect in the urine and excessive sugar levels in urine is again a perfect atmosphere for coli cultures to multiply and colonize the whole of the urinary tract. Plus any yeast adding to the infection, a sugary pee is like a feast to the yeast!
Solution- One thing you should do on a priority basis is to keep your sugar levels under control. Plus, refrain from eating sweets and sugary processed foods at all costs while you are suffering from an infection.

8. You are using OTC vaginal washes, fragrant products, lubricants, or could also be douching. This is one of the worst things you could be doing to your genital health because the constituents of the products extensively hamper with the flora of your urinary tract. Plus it causes havoc in the pH levels. All this is like inviting loads of bacteria to make your urinary tract their farm house so that they can keep visiting every now and then!
Solution- To realize that your lady parts are capable of self-cleansing and practices like douching or using vaginal washes are a big no-no! Washing with water(and if that doesn’t satisfy you, use a mild soap)is all your lady parts need. That’s going to take care of the cleansing part and the odour part too.

How Do You Get Rid Of A UTI? (Read Home Remedies For UTI)

Over-the-counter UTI treatment – not an option. UTI treatment without antibiotics – sounds like a yes. So, if this is what your mind is juggling between, first off – you aren’t alone. 1 in 5 women feel you. Next, if you are desperately in search of natural and herbal remedies to treat UTI, here you go!

1. Gulp Down As Much Water As You Can

“How to cure a UTI?” Just a gallon of water should do. There is no limit as such, to how much water you should be drinking as a natural remedy for a UTI. Enjoy as many glasses as you can but make sure you drink at least 8 glasses of water over the entire day so that you can flush chunks of the bacteria out of your system every time you urinate. Increased consumption of water causes what is called as a ‘flushing’ effect, and that is exactly why you should start with drinking lots of water as a first step in treatment of UTI. Also, to make the treatment more efficient, drink as much water as you can on an empty stomach first thing in the morning. This will alter the bowel movements in a way that will help you ease any kind of abdominal pain or cramps that happen in the case of a UTI.

2. The Baking Soda Trick
Baking soda, looks like, is the most popular alkalizer today in the market. However, it is important to use this home remedy in moderation and with at least a minimum awareness about how the ingredient works. With that cautionary note, let me tell you, use baking soda to treat your Urinary Tract Infection only until the symptoms
disappear. Do NOT continue using even after the symptoms are gone and definitely not for more than one week whatsoever.

Mix ½ teaspoon to 1 (at the most) in one glass of pure water and gulp it down quickly before the effervescence is gone. You might get a burp or two, which is not something you need to worry about. That is how baking soda expels carbon dioxide from your gut, and this is a sign of neutralization. Once you provide this alkaline environment to the gut, the bacteria responsible for causing your UTI will first stop multiplying and eventually die. Baking soda for UTI is hence one of the easiest ways to treat the problem at home naturally.

3. Include Watery Foods In Your Diet

When they say that your body should be sufficiently hydrated, we think of bottles and bottles of water, and at the most think of fruit juices and smoothies. But hey! Did you know broccoli – green bunch of florets that go into most of the salads and indeed tastes heavenly – consists of NINETY per cent water by weight? Tell me that about watermelon and I would have believed but broccoli? Really? Hence, the lesson I learnt from the Broccoli incident is that there are tons of water-dense fruits and vegetables that are excellent ways of hydrating your body. Put that glass down once in a while and eat these fruits and vegetables, instead.
- Cucumbers
- Cabbage
- Tomatoes
- Spinach
- Zucchini
- Celery
- Aubergine
- Bell peppers
- Oranges
- Pineapple
- Raspberries (All berries in fact!)

Of course, to add to the list, broccoli and watermelon have already been mentioned. So now you have an extra excuse to eat clean, feel clean, and in this case, pee clean.

4. A Little Of Apple Cider Vinegar

One major problem with an untreated UTI is that it could spread all the way from the bladder to the kidneys. Apple Cider Vinegar for a UTI works in multiple ways. It provides a hostile environment to bacteria and stops them from multiplying and worsening the infection. Plus, it curbs the spreading of these existing bacteria to the kidney.

All you have to do is take 1-2 tablespoons of Apple Cider Vinegar. You can consume it directly if you can handle it. Nonetheless, mixing it with a tablespoon of honey or diluting it in a cup of water are some alternatives that work efficiently as well.
One thing you should keep in mind is to select the right kind of Apple Cider Vinegar. Pick up that ACV which contains the Mother strands – The ACV that isn’t pasteurized, is unrefined/unfiltered, and comprises of the inoculum or culture that usually converts vinegar into ACV. By consuming this kind of ACV, you will reap additional benefits because it consists of beneficial bacteria, essential proteins, and a host of enzymes that will all be helpful in treating your painful UTI.

5. Give The Native American Remedy A Shot – Bearberry (‘UvaUrsi’)
Bearberry has been a popular remedy for urinary and kidney-related problems since a long time among Native Americans. It has a compound in it called allatonin which works as a demulcent on the urinary tract system. It soothes the walls and reduces inflammation. Plus, it also helps in ridding you of the bacteria from the body. This, it does by reducing the acidity of the urine which helps in creating an unfavourable environment for the bacteria. Plus, it is a powerful diuretic. So, this way you pee frequently and all the uropathogens are out of the urinary tract quickly.

There are a number of forms in which Bearberry is available in the market. You could drink the Uva tea, or take tablets/capsules. There are concentrated tinctures available. However, the most efficient way of consuming is by brewing tea using the Bearberry leaves.

6. Eat Plenty Of Probiotics
If you are looking for a UTI treatment without antibiotic usage, then ‘pro’biotics it is! Research shows that a decreased amount of good bacteria in the gut, Lactobacillus specifically, makes you more vulnerable to a UTI. When your gut and the vagina are sufficiently and in fact, over populated by the bacteria of the Lactobacillus species, women not only experienced relief (according to a research) from that bout of UTI but also suffered from fewer attacks in the future. Drinking probiotic or fermented milk, consuming foods like the regular or Greek yogurt and indulging in fermented foods like sauerkraut will rid you of the infection quickly.
However, remember that for the bacterial population to increase with the aid of dietary probiotic, it could take a while and this is not an instant remedy as drinking lots of water proves to be. You could also consider taking probiotic supplements which might hasten the process. However including probiotics in your diet should become a regular habit if you often struggle with recurring UTIs.

7. If Water Is Too Mainstream (Which It Never Is), Drink Unsweetened Cranberry Juice

Cranberry juice, in fact, should have been the first in my list of home remedies, for, that is how effective this technique is. Drinking cranberry juice can give you results in as less as 2 hours. It not only shows the result quickly, it also remains effective upto 10 hours from drinking. Well, what is that effect? This natural remedy for UTI is all over the internet and that is what evoked the curiosity in me to find out if it was worth the limelight. And yes, it is.

The main problem posed by E.coli, the monster in this case, is that it sticks to the vaginal walls and remains there, causing all the possible discomfort while urinating. These particular species have powerful ‘adhesins’ that stick to the receptors of the vaginal walls. It is these adhesins that are rendered ineffective by some constituents of cranberry.
This process is carried out by altering the shape and length of the bacteria. One of the constituents is a kind of a sugar which is present in all fruits. Apart from this, there are many other substances in cranberry that make it even more effective to make the bacteria lose their adhesive property.

Drinking even 250 ml of this juice is effective enough to make the bacteria get out of your vagina as soon as possible. Make sure you drink pure cranberry juice that is unsweetened. Store-bought sugar and preservative filled cranberry juice might not be what you are looking for if you intend to cure your UTI as quickly as you can.

8. Spice It Up With Cinnamon

Yes, you could spice up your life even with a UTI (with cinnamon, I mean). Cinnamon is not just going to add some vigour to your coffees and toffees but also has a ton of healing properties. One of it that’s going to take care of your UTI is the antibacterial property of the substance called cinnamaldehyde that’s present in this spice. You could use this bark either by ingesting the powder (not more than 4g a day) or you could consider using cinnamon oil (preferably 1g but definitely not more than 2g) or even capsules to relieve yourself from the debilitating symptoms of this infection.

9. Add Some Turmeric To Your Diet

Turmeric is yet another wonder drug for fighting the ill effects of pathogens like bacteria, virus, and even fungi. UTIs are predominantly caused by bacteria, but could also be contributed by certain fungal species. Whatever be the cause, turmeric fights it off efficiently. The substances in turmeric to which the antimicrobial property can be attributed are circumin, turmerone and curlone. Like the constituents of cranberry, circumin also makes alterations in the bacterial cell compositions, which ultimately lead to the death of bacterial cells.
Apart from this property, there’s yet another way in which turmeric functions as an antimicrobial substance. Bacterial cells form colonies in the urinary tract if not acted upon immediately. This colonisation takes place because of the terrific communication system that exists among the bacteria. Technically this process is termed as quorum sensing. Interestingly, turmeric has anti-quorum qualities which stop the multiplication of the pathogens.

Adding to these benefits is the antioxidant property that helps in saving the kidneys from oxidative stress that takes place as a result of a UTI. You could ingest turmeric powder with honey or brew turmeric tea from fresh turmeric roots. You could also drink turmeric milk which is often referred to as the “golden milk” because of its precious healing properties.

### 10. D-Mannose – A ‘Naturally’ Occurring Sugar

The secret hero ingredient in cranberry juice that makes all the difference is this naturally occurring sugar called d-mannose. However, it is important to note that this sugar is found in all fruits. It sticks to stubborn bacteria that have invaded and adhered to the walls of the urinary tract. This way their adhesion to the organs decreases drastically and next when you urinate, the bacteria can be easily expelled from the system.

In case of a severe infection apart from supplying d-mannose to the body with fruits like berries, pineapples, peaches and of course, cranberry, you could also try supplementing with a d-mannose powder. Mix 2 grams which equates to 1 teaspoon of the powder in water and drink it once in every 3 hours. You could gradually decrease the dose once you find relief from the symptoms and eventually stop completely.

Although, consuming foods rich in d-mannose is a great way of trying to heal the urinary tract, when the infection has gone way too far, you can unhesitatingly try d-mannose supplements. This powder is not only natural, but is also safe even when used in its pure form.

### 11. Coconut – Lots Of It In All Its Forms

**Coconut Oil**

There are two ways you can use coconut oil to cure UTI. One is to directly consume organic coconut oil. You have up to as much as 3 and half tablespoons of coconut oil with a glass of lukewarm water. If you find the flavour unpalatable, blend it in a smoothie and keep slowly sipping it. You could also apply good amounts of
this oil topically. The healthy fats present in this oil show antimicrobial properties which help your body fight the infection without having to tolerate the harsh side effects of antibiotics.

Coconut Water
Frequent visits to the loo and worse still – spending hours together inside with that constant urge to pee is something most women face with chronic UTIs. In addition to that you drink loads of fluids so that you will be able to flush the bacteria when you pee. In this process, you urinate more frequently than normal. This could cause an imbalance in the electrolytes in your body, specifically sodium. Drinking coconut water helps you regain the balance. You can savour the water from 2 or even 3 tender coconuts in a day until you find relief from the symptoms.

Coconut Milk
If consuming coconut oil in any form is something you can’t think of, then a better alternative is to drink coconut milk that is made out of tender coconut flesh. The chemical compound called monoalurin present in coconut milk has antibacterial and antiviral properties. These compounds are safe even for kids and in fact these very compounds are also found in a mother’s breast milk. You could savour coconut milk to reap the exact same benefits that the oil or water can provide you with.

12. Some Chopped Raw Garlic
Garlic is a powerful antimicrobial agent. It has the power to block the quorum-sensing (mentioned above) in pathogens which drastically decreases the intensity of harm those microbes can cause. The compound called allicin present in garlic is the primary agent that does all the wonders.
Alliin is the substance in garlic that gets converted into Allicin when the enzyme called Alliinase works on it. You smell that pungent (borderline yummy) aroma when you chop cloves of fresh garlic? Yes, that is because of allicin. Holistic practitioners believe that it is this compound that contributes to the antibacterial, antifungal, and anti-inflammatory properties to garlic. So, peel some (2-3) cloves of raw garlic out and chop them. Eat them right away because allicin is an unstable compound and must be consumed right after garlic is chopped. Continue this remedy for four days to naturally cure UTI.

13. Soak Yourself In A Sitz Bath

Since your visits to the bathroom are definitely going to be quite frequent until the infection subsides, try making friends with the bathroom. No, honestly – indulge in a relaxing sitz bath. Fill your bathtub with water which is as hot as you can possibly tolerate. Add a cup of Epsom salt, and you could even add a cup of Apple Cider Vinegar. Sit in the bathtub in a way that the hot water comes exactly till your hips. Try sitting in a position where you can spread your legs and make yourself really comfortable. Or you could use a sitz bath which is designed aptly for this purpose.

The hot water acts on the abdomen and the pelvic area directly and gives instant relief from pain and cramps. You could go ahead and add essential oils of your choice to enjoy this trip to the bathroom to the fullest extent. The heat from the water, the Epsom salts, the ACV – all help in decolonizing the vaginal bacteria and reduce their speedy multiplication.

14. Vitamin Way, I mean A

When there is an infection, the body’s immune system needs to be strong enough to knock the uninvited foreigners out. This is where Vitamin A comes in handy. It is given the tag ‘anti-infective’ for a purpose that it enhances the body’s defence response to infections, specifically in the gut. This, it does by strengthening the epithelial lining of the gut which functions as a barrier to protect the internal body from external pathogens.
When your body is struggling to fight an infection, while you treat it with natural remedies or OTC drugs, supporting it with Vitamin A is a prudent idea. This is because while the antibacterial agents fight with the bacteria, the vitamin can prep the body to form a stronger army, aka the epithelial layer of the Gastrointestinal Tract.

15. Kill Some Bacteria (And The Other Parasites That Could Be Causing The UTI) With Oregano Oil

Do your homework (reading this article is a part of it, I know) and find a brand that can deliver you a bottle of 100% pure oregano oil which can be ingested. It is going to remind you a lot of pizzas, that’s the inevitable side effect and nothing can be done about that! However, you could use an empty gel capsule, fill it with 100% pure organic oregano oil and have two of them for at least 3 days. It should take you about 10-12 drops to fill the capsule. Make sure you take this pill with juice or better still eat something after you have taken it. This is to ensure that is not hanging around midway in the gut and has actually gone into your stomach.

If you happen to see reduction in your symptoms, which I am sure you will, continue to take it for 2 additional days just to make sure the infection is completely gone. Oregano oil is replete with antimicrobial properties and is super effective in treating bacterial infections, flu, and even fungal infection like Candida. Plus, it does a huge favour of not killing the good bacteria. It in fact, strikes a perfect flora balance in your gut by removing the bad ones and keeping the good ones. Such a nice soul, isn’t it!

16. Or Try Tea Tree Oil

Although you cannot internally consume tea tree oil, you can topically use it on the urethral opening. Tea tree oil is an effective natural remedy to both prevent and control the intensity of a UTI. It has antibacterial properties and can curb the growth of not just E.coli but a few other Staph infections and infections caused by the Streptococcus species as well. You could mix around 5-10 drops of this oil to either clean water or better still carrier oil like coconut oil. Apply it in the vaginal area every day till you rid yourself of the UTI.
17. Parsley Tea

Another way you could possibly heal the urinary tract is by consuming Parsley tea for at least 3-4 days. In some severe cases, it can be continued up to a week or even ten days to experience full-fledged relief from the painful symptoms of this bacterial infection. The herb parsley is a diuretic – an agent that increases urine output. By consuming this tea you will observe that you need to urinate more than usual. This way you expel a lot of bacteria through urine. Also, the bacterial strands lose their power to stay attached to the urinary tract because of Parsley tea’s natural property of intensive penetration.

It is usually prescribed to take the whole of Parsley i.e. the leaves, the stems, and even the roots if possible. If you happen to have a herb garden, this isn’t too difficult for you. Take some fresh whole Parsley, chop it finely. Boil around 3-4 cups of water and take it off the fire. Now allow the Parsley to infuse itself in the boiled water for at least 20 minutes. Consume 4 cups of this each day until your UTI is gone.

Caution- Pregnant women and the ones on their menstrual cycle should avoid this remedy because Parsley can potentially cause uterine contractions which could prove painful and dangerous during pregnancy and periods.

18. Green Tea

Apart from all the antioxidants that green tea is filled with, research now says that it also has an antimicrobial effect and specifically on E.coli bacteria. The substance called epigallochatecin (EGC), a particular kind of polyphenol or chatecin present in green tea is what makes the whole difference. This substance bestows an inhibitory effect on the bacteria situated all along the gut right until the urethral opening.

Consuming even one cup of green tea has shown considerable effect on the uropathogens. However, it is also important you select a high-quality and organic green tea because the method in which the plant was cultivated influences the chatecin content in the tea. Sipping on multiple cups of green tea over an entire day is an excellent natural remedy to treat UTI.
That was quite a list! Well, on a brighter side, think of this, ladies! You get to eat fresh fruits, lots of veggies, and then this elixir called water is all over your system trying to flush every bacterium out. And not to forget there’s a list of herbs you can pick from, brew mugs and mugs of rejuvenating tea out of them, and then the best part of a UTI is – hang around in dirty clothes and messy hair all day and there’s no one giving you those could-you-be-more-civilized sort of looks! Why not do all of these to prevent a UTI than to cure it? Now that you know how to do the preventing part, you’d rather enjoy all this even before it starts to burn down there! What say?

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