

What women can do about bladder infection

Women, is this scene familiar? It's only been 15 minutes since you last went to the bathroom. You haven't had one drop of liquid, yet your bladder feels like you've just slammed two Big Gulps. Again you try going to the bathroom, only to feel a painful, burning sensation.

These symptoms, and others such as fever, nausea, and chills, may mean you have cystitis, otherwise known as bladder infection.

According to Jolene Siemsen, nurse practitioner at the Health Center, cystitis is a common complaint among female students. A respected medical journal says that cystitis is the reason for seven million visits to doctors' offices annually, leading to about 1 million hospital admissions.

Because cystitis occurs so frequently, various misconceptions abound. We present a sampling of myths matched with the facts.

MYTH:
Cranberry juice will cure a bladder infection.

FACT:
Although the acid in cranberry juice creates a less friendly environment for bacteria in the bladder, it is not a cure. Many store-bought brands of cranberry juice contain a small amount of actual juice and a lot of sugar, so it doesn't give you optimal effect. Siemsen says that self-treatment at home will probably not work. The best way to treat cystitis is to visit the Health Center. Antibiotics can be prescribed, which will likely cure the problem quickly.

MYTH:
Bladder infections are a direct result of sexual intercourse.

FACT:
Although sexual intercourse and the use of some spermicides are common precursors to cystitis, there are other ways to get a bladder infection. Siemsen says horseback riding, long bike rides, and bubble baths can bring on infections.

MYTH:
If I urinate frequently, or if it hurts to urinate, or if I have the I-just-can't-wait-another-minute feeling, I must have a bladder infection.

FACT:
"It's fairly common for someone with another type of infection to come to the Health Center thinking she has a bladder infection. Self-diagnosis can be risky," Siemsen says. Gonorrhea and chlamydia can also mimic the symptoms of a bladder infection.

There are some preventative steps you can take as well:

- Drink plenty of liquids
- Always urinate when you feel the need
- Urinate before and after sexual intercourse
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which may irritate the bladder

If you have the symptoms of cystitis, the best thing you can do is visit the Health Center. For an appointment call 346-4441.

— Robin Weber

DOCTOR BILLS

THIS IS THE TALE OF TWO DORM MATES
LIKE MOST, THEY WERE FOND OF TV AND JUNK FOOD

THEN, ONE DAY...
WHOA, CHECK OUT THAT POSTER

PEER HEALTH EDUCATION ROOM
TUESDAYS 9:30-11:30AM
DROP BY FOR A FREE CHOLESTEROL SCREENING
1 OUT OF 3 TESTED HAVE HIGH CHOLESTEROL
HEY, MAYBE WE SHOULD DO THAT

HA! NO NEED
I'M INVINCIBLE
WHY DO I BOTHER?

ONE BLOOD TEST LATER...
WHAT'S WITH THE LONG FACE?
MY CHOLESTEROL COUNT WAS REALLY HIGH
OH POOP

ABOUT YOUR CHOLESTEROL MR. DUCK...

SINCE THE EFFECTS OF HIGH CHOLESTEROL SETS IN AFTER AGE 20, IT'D BE BEST TO START EATING BETTER AND EXERCISING MORE

WELL, LOOKS LIKE I FOUND MYSELF AN EXERCISE PARTNER
I GUESS SO

AND SO, THE TWO DORM MATES TOOK SEPARATE PATHS
MUNCH

THIRTY YEARS AND ONE HEART ATTACK LATER
WELL DOC, I GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT

OH, DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL RECOVER SOON
YEAH OLD BUDDY, WE'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU

PEER HEALTH EDUCATION ROOM
346-4456 TUESDAYS 9:30-11:30AM
FREE CHOLESTEROL SCREENING AND FREE POST-SCREENING COUNSELING WITH A PEER HEALTH EDUCATOR OR A DIETITIAN
CREATED BY: GREG BYRD
DRAWN BY: MICHAEL WIGHT 11/13/96



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