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PATIENT INFORMATION - IRRITATIVE VOIDING SYMPTOMS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP RELIEVE YOUR SYMPTOMS

The purpose of this handout is to provide information that can help you discover what you are ingesting or doing that may be contributing to your recurrent irritative voiding symptoms and what steps you can take to relieve your discomfort.

Frequency, urgency, and pain on urination are symptoms of inflammation or irritation. These symptoms can be caused by bacterial infections or substances in the urine causing irritation to the lining of the bladder or urethra. Bacterial infections can be treated by antibiotics. But irritation of the bladder or urethra can result from other causes that will probably not respond to antibiotics.

WHAT TO DO AT THE FIRST SIGN OF BLADDER OR URETHRAL DISCOMFORT

The basic treatment for irritable bladder symptoms whether induced by bacterial or nonbacterial irritants, is hydration. At the first sign of discomfort, start hydration by drinking 16 ounces of water mixed with 1 teaspoon of baking soda. Then drink 8 ounces of plain water every 20 minutes for the next 2 to 3 hours.

Repeat drinking 16 ounces of water with baking soda in 3 to 4 hours. (Baking soda contains sodium and can cause fluid retention. If you have a history of high blood pressure, do not use the baking soda more than twice in 24 hours.

You can take acetaminophen to relieve the pain (two extra-strength or three regular strength tablets). Bladder analgesics such as phenazopyridine (Pyridium) may help and will not alter the results of a urine culture should the symptoms not be significantly relieved by diluting the urine and flushing out the bladder. Do not take phenazopyridine for more than 2-3 days.

A warm bath to help muscles of the pelvis relax will also help lessen discomfort.

Before starting any antibiotic, a urine culture must be taken. If the conservative measures mentioned above are not helping, call the office to arrange for a urine culture. If the specimen is contaminated with vaginal cells and bacteria and you are severely symptomatic, then a catheterized specimen should be obtained directly from your bladder to determine precisely whether bacterial infection is the cause of your symptoms.

Dietary Irritants to Avoid

Certain food can contribute to urinary frequency, urgency, and discomfort. If bladder symptoms are related to dietary factors, strict adherence to a diet that eliminates the food should bring significant relief in 10 days. Once you are feeling better, you can begin to add foods back into your diet, one at a time. If symptoms return, you will be able to identify the irritant. **As you add foods back into your diet, it is very important that you drink significant amounts of water.**

The following foods are acidic and considered irritants to the bladder and prostate. They should be avoided.

Aged cheese	Pepper
Alcoholic beverages	Pineapple
Apples and apple juice	Plums
Canned, smokes, processed meats	Preservatives (MSG, nitrates, artificial ingredients and colors)
Cantaloupe	Spices
Carbonated beverages	Strawberries
Chili and spicy foods	Sugar
Citrus fruits	Sugar substitutes (aspartame, saccharin)
Chocolate	Tea (except green tea)
Coffee (including decaffeinated)	Tomatoes
Cranberries and cranberry juice	Vitamin B complex
Grapes	Vitamin C supplements
Guava	Vinegar
Onions	Yogurt
Peaches	

Low acid fruit substitutions include apricots, papaya, pears, and watermelon. Coffee drinkers can drink Kava or other low-acid drinks. Tea drinkers can substitute non-citrus herbal (such as green tea) and sun-brewed teas. Calcium carbonate co-buffered with calcium ascorbate can be substituted for Vitamin C.