

UTI *factsheet*

The Truth about Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infection (UTI) is a neglected disease that places an enormous burden on the economy and healthcare system. Each year over 150 million people worldwide will experience a UTI with females four times more likely than males. At least half of all women will acquire a UTI in their lifetime, and a third of these occur before the age of 24. A compounding factor is around a quarter of these people will experience a reoccurrence within six months, with some going on to develop a chronic form of urinary infection. Children are also prone, with one in 10 girls and one in 30 boys developing a UTI before the age of 16. Chronic UTI (cUTI) is a largely misunderstood form of the disease that is extremely difficult to diagnose and treat under current guidelines. While 80 percent of cUTI sufferers are female, it is especially prevalent among elderly women where it is not only cruel and debilitating, but also life-threatening.

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- > **Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)** is one of the most common human bacterial infections with over 150 million people worldwide affected each year.
 - > **At least half of all women will develop a UTI** in their lifetime, with 20-30 percent going on to experience a recurrence and a significant subset developing a chronic form of UTI.
 - > **Diagnostic tests for UTI have been widely discredited** in peer-reviewed publications for over 30 years, yet UK guidelines still recommend a positive test result before a UTI diagnosis is made.
 - > **Current guidelines for UTI are causing serious chronic disease** in an estimated 0.6 percent of the UK population whose infections remain undiagnosed because of heavy reliance on these discredited tests.
 - > **Up to 30 percent of patients** managed according to current guidelines will fail to respond to treatment. There are currently no guidelines on how to treat those who fail to respond, so the infection is left untreated. The various governance authorities continue to ignore peer-reviewed literature and insist these people be managed according to severely inadequate published guidelines.
 - > **Despite having clear symptoms of UTI** patients are routinely denied appropriate treatment because doctors accept test results as being a better indicator of disease than the clinical signs and symptoms reported by the patient. Meanwhile, these tests are proven to be out-dated and severely inadequate.
 - > **Patients are often misdiagnosed** with a 'bladder syndrome' in attempt to explain their continued UTI symptoms. It is estimated that 12 million people in the UK suffer a 'bladder condition' with around 500,000 diagnosed with interstitial cystitis/painful bladder syndrome (IC/PBS).
 - > **Once established, chronic UTI (cUTI) and recurrent UTI (rUTI) cannot be eradicated** with short-term antibiotics. NICE recommends '*the need for evidence-based guidance for recurrent UTIs*', but states '*no source guidance is currently available*'.
 - > **Left untreated, cUTI causes ongoing, debilitating and life-changing symptoms** including extreme urinary frequency, urinary urgency, agonising pain, inability to sleep properly, work, look after children and have normal sexual relationships.
 - > **Health economists estimate** using long-term antibiotics to treat cUTI costs c £500 per patient per year. This contrasts with c £5,000 per patient for a year's treatment by conventional methods. These may well include procedures which are invasive, generally ineffective and can even aggravate the condition.