

# Cystitis/UTI: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Burning pain on urination increased urinary frequency, especially at night (nocturia)

Cloudy, foul-smelling, or dark urine

Lower abdominal pain

Urinalysis shows significant number of bacteria and white blood cells

Powdered solid extract (10% arbutin): 250-500 mg

• Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*) Dried root (or as tea): 1-2 g

Freeze-dried root: 500-1,000 mg Tincture (1:5): 4-6 ml (1-1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tsp)

Fluid extract (1:1): 0.5-2.0 ml (1/4-1/2 tsp.)

Powdered solid extract (8% alkaloid): 250-500 mg      .      --

## QUICK REVIEW

- If you have symptoms suggestive of a bladder infection, consult a physician.
- There is a growing concern that antibiotic therapy actually promotes recurrent bladder infections.
- The primary goal in the natural approach to treating bladder infections is to enhance the immune system and other protective factors against infection.

Drinking at least 64 ounces of water daily increases urine flow to combat cystitis.

Alkalinizing the urine with citrate salts relieves cystitis.

Cranberry juice has been shown to be quite effective in several clinical studies.

Uva ursi is effective in the treatment of acute bladder infections and is also a preventive measure.

## TREATMENT SUMMARY

While the occasional acute bladder infection is easily treated, treating chronic bladder infections requires determining the underlying cause. Structural abnormalities, excessive sugar consumption, food allergies, nutritional deficiencies, chronic vaginitis, local foci of infection (e.g., prostate, kidneys), and current or childhood sexual abuse are all potential causes that must be evaluated and resolved.

### General Measures

- Drink large quantities of fluids (at least 2 quarts per day), including at least 16 ounces of unsweetened cranberry or 8 ounces of blueberry juice per day.
- Urinate after intercourse. Women who develop bladder infections after intercourse should wash their labia and urethra with a strong tea of *Hydrastis canadensis* (2 tsp per cup) both before and after. If this is inadequate, a dilute solution of povidone-iodine will usually prove effective.

### Diet

Avoid all simple sugars, refined carbohydrates, and full-strength fruit juice (diluted fruit juice is acceptable), and food allergens.

### Nutritional Supplements

- Citrate: dosage can be based on the level of elemental mineral such as potassium, magnesium, or calcium. The dosage recommendation is 125 to 250 mg three to four times daily.
- Vitamin C: 500 mg every two hours
- Bioflavonoids: 1,000 mg per day
- Vitamin A: 50,000 IU per day for up to two days in infants and up to one week in adults 200,000 iu/d

**WARNING:** Do not use vitamin A in sexually active women of childbearing age without effective birth control due to the link with birth defects at high dosages.

- Zinc: 30 mg per day

Botanical Medicines

Choose one; dosages can be taken three times daily with a large glass of water.

NOTE: Neither uva ursi nor goldenseal is recommended during pregnancy.

Uvaursi (*Arctostaphylos uva ursi*) Dried leaves or as a tea: 1.5-4.0 g (1-2 tsp)

Freeze-dried leaves: 500-1,000 mg Tincture (1:5): 4-6 ml (1-1.5 tsp)

Fluid extract (1:1): 0.5-2.0 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp)