

Ain't no shame in a UTI – busting the UTI myths

“I always feel like people are judging me when I get a UTI, like it's some dirty, shameful thing. A lot of women suffer from UTIs, it's not a dirty thing. Some women are just more prone to them,”- said Sara, a 28-year old, married woman.

There is an unwarranted amount of personal and external shame associated with urinary tract infections (UTIs), likely due to sex as the primary cause. Some sufferers blame themselves, but also experience disapproval from others. (You know the online trolls that comment, post and tweet while never having experienced the UTI burn or pain.) Women are often embarrassed. They're angry and want the infection to go away right now: “I just need an antibiotic,” is a frequent request for their doctor, without wanting to get into too much detail. What's worse, many healthcare providers don't recognize how their questions or body language may reflect disapproval, albeit unintentional. Or, they have limited time in an appointment to clear up common misconceptions that fuel the stigma.

The negativity that exists surrounding UTIs – as with most medical misunderstandings – is largely due to a lack of knowledge, so we're busting the UTI myths once and for all. **Ladies, having sex puts you at a greater risk of getting an infection, but it doesn't actually cause the infection and it certainly doesn't make a woman promiscuous or dirty.**

- Because women's urethras are close to their anuses, where bacteria like E. coli live, the bacteria don't have far to go to get to the urethra and are given a push during sex.
- UTIs are not sexually transmitted infections despite sex being one of the triggers. Certain birth control, hormonal and vaginal pH changes, menopause and some medical conditions are also to blame.
- No one knows why one woman's bladder is more likely to get UTIs than another! Some women will never get UTIs, some will get them only occasionally, and some will get them over and over again. Single, married, pregnant, not pregnant, menopausal or premenopausal – UTIs do not discriminate!
- Of course personal hygiene, wiping front to back and peeing after sex are important, even if they are not a sure thing they are proactive steps you can take to keep bacteria out of your bladder.
- Drinking lots of water is great for your urinary tract health – it will help to flush out bacteria. Once those bacteria shack up in the bladder, it doesn't take long for them to get comfy and nothing can kick them off their sofa.
- You need an antibiotic to TREAT an infection, but taking them forever to prevent UTIs is not a good idea. Life-threatening side effects and antibiotic resistance (many antibiotics are no longer working) is creating a real health crisis.

Ladies, getting a UTI is not your fault!

Empower yourself to be an advocate for your own health and don't let anyone tell you differently.