A urinary tract infection (UTI) is an infection of the bladder typically caused by bacteria. The most common symptoms are pain or burning with urination, lower abdominal pain, or fever. Sometimes, people may have back pain, urinate more, or need to urinate more quickly.

When a patient has one or more UTI symptoms, the provider may order a test called a urinalysis, or U-A. A urine sample is obtained and then sent to the lab. If there are signs of possible infection in the urine, more tests are performed to see if bacteria are present in the urine.

If the doctor or advanced practice provider has determined that you have a UTI, you will most likely be given antibiotics. The medicine kills or weakens the bacteria that causes the infection. Sometimes antibiotics may have to be changed after getting final urine culture results in 2 days. The lab results tell us which antibiotics can treat the infection.

Many people have bacteria in their urine that do not cause problems. If you do not have symptoms of a UTI, then taking antibiotics will not make you feel better or prevent you from getting a urinary tract infection in the future. Antibiotics might even make you feel worse. In this case, it is best to monitor your symptoms that may suggest infection. Make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids.
**My loved one is confused; shouldn’t we check to make sure she/he doesn’t have a UTI?**

Maybe not. There are many causes of confusion. These can include dehydration, depression, medication side effects, lack of sleep, constipation, and others.

If your loved one has symptoms of a urinary tract infection, such as pain or burning with urination, urinating more, abdominal pain, new back pain, or fever, then a UTI may be the cause. If not, then it is best to look for other causes of the symptoms.

**My loved one’s urine is dark, odorous, or cloudy. Does that mean she/he has a UTI?**

Probably not. There are many things that change the color, clarity, and smell of urine including what one has eaten and how much and what they are drinking. If the urine is different than normal, it is best to make sure that the person is drinking enough fluid and staying hydrated. It is also important to watch for any other changes that would suggest a UTI such as pain or burning with urination, increased need to urinate, abdominal pain, new back pain, or fever.

**What can I do to help prevent my loved one from getting another urinary tract infection?**

The most important way to help prevent UTIs is for a person to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. It is also important to have good hygiene. However, even despite the best care, UTIs may still occur.