

Our goal at *(insert facility name)* is to provide the best care possible for residents, working together with residents and their families. In order to maintain the high standard of care, we wanted to share with you some new research and recommendations regarding the diagnosis and treatment of Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs).

UTIs are caused by bacteria in the bladder or urinary tract that result in the specific symptoms listed below; these symptoms may also be accompanied by a fever.

- Burning during urination
- Strong urge to urinate (urgency)
- Needing to urinate more often (frequency)
- Pressure or pain in pelvis
- Blood in the urine
- Pain along one side of lower back

If a resident is experiencing specific urinary tract symptoms, our practitioners may decide to test a resident's urine to look for bacteria and signs of infection. Antibiotics can be a good treatment for residents who are experiencing these specific urinary tract symptoms and have bacteria in their urine.

Sometimes other symptoms that a resident is experiencing can be confused with symptoms of a UTI. For example, confusion, fatigue, foul-smelling or cloudy urine or loss of balance or fall, are often thought to be caused by a UTI. However, there are many other potential causes of these symptoms. In fact, many older adults have bacteria in their urine even when they don't have a UTI. It is important to avoid the use of antibiotics when they are not needed because they **might cause more harm than good**.

How can antibiotics be harmful? Antibiotics can cause side effects like fever, rash, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and headache. Antibiotics can also kill the "good" bacteria that we have in our bodies. This can lead to the development of other infections, such as ***Clostridium difficile infection*** (also known as ***C. diff***). *C. diff* is a highly contagious infection that causes severe diarrhea and can even be fatal. Overusing antibiotics can also cause bacteria to become "drug resistant." Drug resistant bacteria are very hard to kill, may cause more serious infections with fewer treatment choices available. It is important to remember that **antibiotics are not always necessary**. By understanding the risks of using antibiotics when they are not needed, you can help ensure all of our residents get the best care possible.

Based on current research, the staff at *(insert facility name)* will perform urine testing only when specific urinary tract symptoms are present. Without these symptoms, residents will be observed and monitored for any changes. Antibiotics will be prescribed if the practitioner is sure that there is an infection.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.