

## Urinary Tract Infection / Jesus Heals a Woman

**Sylvia:** My husband and I planned a lovely long weekend away by ourselves. He had been very busy and we had not had much time together for a while. My mother looked after the children, and we stayed in a small house that belongs to our friends. We did enjoy the chance to be just by ourselves, like a newly married couple. But on the third day I suddenly felt really sick. I felt hot and shaky, and the worst thing was the burning feeling when I passed urine. It felt like knives! And I felt like I needed to go to the toilet again every few minutes. I just wanted to get home to my own bed and a hot water bottle. It really spoiled our holiday.

**Carol:** Hello friend, I'm so happy to be with you again. How are you? I hope you're feeling well – not like the woman in our story today. And welcome you to *Women of Hope*, our program especially for women. I wonder if you have ever had a problem like Sylvia had on her holiday.

**Tammy:** I haven't, but it doesn't sound too good. Have you, Carol?

**Carol:** Yes, I have Tammy and so today we have a guest with us who is going to tell us about this problem. It is called a Urinary Tract Infection, commonly referred to as UTI. A lot of women have it apparently for various reasons that we will discuss in a while. But the good news is, it can be quite easily treated.

**Tammy:** As long as it is diagnosed early I suppose as with most health problems. Today our guest has treated many different women's problems and she's also treated a number of patients with UTI. Stay with us and let's together discuss how we can take better care of ourselves.

**Carol:** Welcome back. You're with *Women of Hope* and we're discussing Urinary Tract Infections.

**Doctor:** I'm delighted to be here. The story you heard happened to a friend of mine who has just recovered from a UTI.

**Tammy:** So, what did she do after she got home?

**Doctor:** When she got home she came to me at the clinic. My nurse asked for a sample of urine to test, and told me it had lots of germs, called bacteria, in it. I gave her some tablets to stop the

infection, and also told her to drink lots of water. I suggested that she could also take some tablets for the pain as she said it was very painful. She felt better the next day.

What she had was clearly a urinary tract infection or UTI. It is very common in women. One in every five women gets UTIs. Fortunately, they can usually be prevented by following a few simple rules. I'll tell you about these shortly.

But first I'd like to explain to you where a UTI occurs. It is an infection that can happen anywhere along the urinary tract. The urinary tract includes the kidneys, which act as a filter to collect waste from the blood...the ureter, the tube that carries this waste and extra water to the bladder, where it is stored as urine or wee. When the bladder is full, the urine passes out of the body through another tube called the urethra. All of these are part of the Urinary Tract – and any part can be infected.

**Tammy:** Why is it more common in women?

**Doctor:** Women tend to get them more often because the tube that empties urine (urethra) and the tube that empties stools (anus) are quite close to each other. A woman's urethra is much shorter than a man's. A lot of germs or bacteria collect there and cause the infection.

Children can also get UTI and so can the elderly. In the elderly such infections are common due to either prostate or bladder conditions.

**Tammy:** Sylvia said that when she was away for her holiday, she and her husband were like a newly married couple...can a UTI be caused by sexual intercourse?

**Doctor:** Frequent or rough sexual intercourse can cause a UTI. But there are many other reasons:

- If you are constipated or having diarrhea you are more likely to get a UTI.
- Pregnant women often get them.
- A person who is recovering from surgery and has to stay still for a long period of time may also develop UTI.
- Women going through menopause can also get UTI because the lining of all those tubes becomes thin and dry.
- Not drinking enough water can also lead to a UTI, especially if you have had one before.
- Men can get UTIs if they have a prostate enlargement or infection.

Finally certain birth control methods such as the diaphragm can also contribute to UTIs.

**Tammy:** Are the symptoms all the same? Needing to urinate a lot and pain when urinating?

**Doctor:** Yes...and there are others too – like cloudy urine, or urine that smells really bad. A person may experience pain during intercourse and a feeling of pressure in the lower pelvis. Sometimes the urine looks pink because there is blood in it. A few people also have a low-grade fever.

I must warn you that if you don't get any treatment for it and the infection spreads to the kidneys, you can get really sick. You may develop a high fever and pain in the abdomen or back. You may become extremely tired, and have nausea or vomiting.

Now this is very important. If you have a UTI and develop symptoms such as back or side pain, chills, fever or vomiting, you have to get to a doctor immediately. They are signs of a possible kidney infection. It could damage the kidneys permanently.

Also see a doctor if symptoms come back soon after completing treatment.

**Carol:** How do we know for sure if we have a UTI?

**Doctor:** Well, if you have any of these symptoms, go to your doctor or health care worker. You will need to give a urine sample. This will be tested to show the type of germ that has caused the infection. The doctor would then prescribe the right antibiotic medicine.

**Tammy:** Can a UTI be treated at home?

**Doctor:** Yes, a mild UTI infection may go away on its own without any treatment. The most important thing to do as soon as you feel you need to urinate too often is to drink lots of fluids, like water, plain soda water, or cranberry juice, if you can get it. Coffee and alcohol irritate the bladder so it is better to avoid these if you have any UTI infections.

To help relieve the pain you can sit on a warm pack or hot water bottle to get some relief too. It may help to take a simple pain killer.

If it does not go away quickly, then you need to see the doctor - who will prescribe antibiotics to prevent the infection from spreading to the kidneys. It is important to take the medicine until it's finished.

**Tammy:** Might you have to go to hospital?

**Doctor:** Yes, when a person is very sick and cannot take medicines orally or drink enough liquid, they may have to be admitted into the hospital. Or if a person is recovering from surgery or is very old and having other medical problems.

**Carol:** Are all treatments successful?

**Doctor:** The good news is, yes, usually a person will recover within a day or two after treatment begins. But if it has spread to the kidneys it may take a week or longer for symptoms to disappear. However, as we said before, it is very important to see your doctor or health care provider and get treatment early to prevent infection spreading and to avoid complications.

**Carol:** How can we prevent a UTI?

**Doctor:** Personal hygiene is very important to help prevent UTIs.

- Keep the area clean with regular bathing.
- Take showers instead of baths and don't use bath oils.
- Keep the genital area clean and always wear clean underwear and fresh sanitary pads.
- To avoid carrying bacteria from the bowel, wash or wipe from front to back after using the toilet.
- Do not use any sprays or creams in the genital area. Wash genital and anal areas before and after sexual activity...and urinate before and after as well.

Sometimes doctors prescribe hormone replacement for women after menopause. It comes as tablets or a vaginal cream, and is used to help strengthen the lining and muscles around the urethra. This helps prevent infections in older women.

Your clothes can make a difference. Don't wear tight fitting pants. Wear cotton underwear and change your underwear at least once a day.

**Tammy:** I have heard that a UTI can go on for a long time. Is that right?

**Doctor:** Yes – if it goes on for a long time, or keeps coming back you may have what we call a ‘chronic’ UTI infection. If it lasts longer than two weeks and does not get better with the usual treatment or if you have two or more infections in 6 months...we would call it a chronic infection.

There is another kind of chronic bladder disease where the lining of the bladder becomes damaged by having many infections. It becomes inflamed even when you do not have an infection. It feels almost the same as having a UTI, but it is different. This kind seems to be irritated by certain foods, including cranberry juice, coffee and tea. So you could try not eating certain foods that you think might be irritating it - to find out which foods make it worse.

**Tammy:** Thank you for sharing with us today. There’s a lot to remember about UTIs isn’t there?

**Carol:** Yes, there is, but I think the most important thing to remember is that if you feel that you need to go to the toilet to pass urine much more than usual and you begin to feel uncomfortable or have pain, try first of all drinking a lot of fluids. If the feeling doesn’t go away, then go and see your doctor or health care worker. They will test to find out if it is a UTI and give you the right treatment.

**Tammy:** we have Fran coming to tell us a true story from God’s word, the Bible. Don’t go away.

**Carol:** Welcome back to Women of Hope. Hi Fran, welcome!

**Fran:** Thank you Carol. Hi Tammy. I’ve had some UTIs and I know how it feels.

When I have any problem in that area of my body, somehow it makes me feel rather insecure as a woman. This reminds me of a true story that happened many years ago. It’s about the Lord Jesus Christ and is written in the Bible (Luke 8: 40-48). I’d like to tell it to you.

One day Jesus was on his way through a dusty, middle-eastern town. An important man in that town had asked him to come to his house, as his daughter was sick. His friends and followers were with him, and a crowd of curious people wanted to see him, because they had heard about his teaching and miracles. They were all jostling and pushing in the narrow street, calling out and trying to see Jesus. It was hard for Jesus to get through the crowd.

There was a woman in the crowd who had a special reason to want to get close to Jesus. She had been bleeding from ‘down below’ for 12 long years. Perhaps she had been torn when she gave birth to babies, and it had never healed. She had spent all her money on doctors, but she was no better. At

that time a bleeding woman was called 'unclean', and people avoided her. Think of how awful that would make you feel! Think how it would affect your marriage and your social life. You would not feel good about yourself as a woman, would you?

This woman had heard about Jesus, and she believed God had given him healing power. She thought 'Maybe if I could just touch him, I would be healed.' So she pushed and wriggled and elbowed her way until she got close enough to reach out and just touch Jesus' cloak.

Suddenly Jesus stopped. 'Who touched me?' he asked.

His followers laughed. 'Everyone is touching you, in this crowd!' said Peter.

'No', said Jesus, 'someone touched me in a different way, because I felt power pass from me'. Jesus looked around...

The woman was shaking, but she felt she should answer Jesus' question. She came forward and threw herself at Jesus' feet. 'I did it', she said. 'I touched you, and at that same moment I felt the bleeding and pain stop. It's gone! After 12 years, when no-one could help me, I know you have healed me. '

Jesus looked down at her with tender compassion, listening to her story. Then he spoke to her, 'My daughter, because of your trust in me you have been made well. Now go in peace.'

Imagine how she felt, and how much she would have praised God. Picture her going home and inviting her family and friends to hear what had happened. I'm sure they had a party! Jesus had not only healed her, he had treated her as a worthwhile person. She would love and follow him for ever after.

You know, there was no magic in Jesus' cloak, and there is no magic in just saying his name. Many people touched him that day without anything happening. But when you come to Jesus with faith; when you believe in him and want to have a trusting relationship with him and follow him, he welcomes you with all his heart (John 6:37).

Friend, you can reach out and 'touch' Jesus by praying to him, and asking him for his help in whatever way you need right now. He promises to hear and answer you.

**Tammy:** Thank you Fran. I love that story. If you want to know more about Jesus Christ, you can contact us...

**Carol:** As a woman, I have always loved this story. Can you imagine how that woman would have felt? When she touched Jesus' cloak and felt her bleeding stop she would have been so amazed!

**Tammy:** And I think she was probably expecting to just melt back into the crowd so that no-one would know what she had done.

**Carol:** Yes, but you know, Jesus had another plan for her. He wanted her to know that he loved her. He wanted to speak to her and tell her that her faith in him had made her well again.

**Tammy:** I wonder how you are feeling right now? Maybe you're not well, or maybe you need to know that you're a worthwhile person – that you are loved.

Let's talk to God about it right now. I would like to pray for you.

*Dear father God,*

*Thank you for sending Jesus to live on this earth. Thank you for this lovely story about the woman who touched him and was made well again. We thank you that Jesus told this woman that her faith had made her well.*

*I pray for my friend as she is listening – that you will help her to put her faith in you...and trust you. Help her to know that she is a worthwhile person and you love her – so much that Jesus gave his life for her.*

*Thank you God for your love, In Jesus' name we pray...Amen.*

**Carol:** Thank you so much for being with us today. We look forward to next time we meet.

**Tammy:** We'll talk together some more soon. But if you would like to write to us you're most welcome. Write to us at [TWRWomenofHope@twr.org](mailto:TWRWomenofHope@twr.org). Our website address is TWRWomenofHope.org. Or you can visit our Facebook page.