

IPC Advice Bulletin for Care Homes

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To further support Care Home staff, here is some information on good infection prevention and control (IPC) practice.

Understanding urinary tract infection in older people

The diagnosis of urinary tract infection (UTI) is difficult in older people who are more likely to have bacteria in their urine which is not causing any harm, (asymptomatic bacteriuria) and doesn't need antibiotic treatment.

Older service users frequently receive unnecessary antibiotic treatment for asymptomatic bacteriuria which puts them at risk of developing *Clostridium difficile* Infection or future antibiotic resistance.

What is a urinary tract infection?

Lower UTI includes infections of the bladder (cystitis) or urethra (the tube that carries urine out of the body).

Symptoms:

- ◆ increased frequency of passing urine
- ◆ pain or discomfort when passing urine
- ◆ sudden urges to urinate/new incontinence
- ◆ lower abdominal pain
- ◆ feeling generally unwell, aches and tiredness.

Upper UTI includes infections of the kidneys or ureters (the tubes connecting the kidneys to the bladder).

Symptoms:

- ◆ high temperature (fever) of 38°C or above
- ◆ low temperature less than 36°C with shivering or chills
- ◆ pain in sides or back
- ◆ new confusion, agitation or restlessness
- ◆ loss of diabetic control.

Offensive smelling urine without other symptoms is not an indication of infection.

Preventing urinary tract infections

Preventing dehydration

- ✓ Ensure service users receive adequate hydration to produce a pale yellow coloured urine to flush bacteria out of the bladder.



Good personal hygiene

- ✓ For females, it is important after they have passed urine to wipe with toilet paper from front to back and dispose of after each wipe into the toilet/commode.
- ✓ When washing the female genital area, wipe from front to back. The cloth/sponge, if not disposable, should be rinsed in warm soapy water between each wipe.
- ✓ Routine personal hygiene, such as a daily bath or shower, is ideal.
- ✓ If unable to bathe, staff should wash the genital area daily with soap and warm water.

Don't ask service users to wait when they need to empty their bladder

Holding a full bladder for long periods of time can quickly lead to a urinary tract infection.

Urinary catheter care

- ✓ Always wash hands and wear a new pair of non-sterile gloves when emptying a catheter bag.
- ✓ Catheter bags should be positioned below the level of the bladder and emptied when ¾ full to prevent back flow of urine into the bladder.
- ✓ Attach the overnight bag to the leg bag to keep the original system intact.



When to send a specimen?

For service users who are over 65 years, consider sending a specimen if there are two or more symptoms of a UTI.

For catheterised service users, consider sending a specimen if their temperature is less than 36°C or greater than 38°C, they have a new or increased confusion or loss of diabetic control.

Specimen collection

Collect a mid-stream or 'clean catch' specimen **before** starting antibiotics.

Use a specimen container with boric acid (red top) as it preserves bacterial numbers for up to 72 hours. Fill to the fill line. If you need a catheter specimen, only take urine from the sampling port, never the bag, using an aseptic technique.



Remember all service users with a catheter will have bacteria in their urine so only take a specimen if there are symptoms of an infection.

REMEMBER

- Do not** take routine dipsticks.
- Do not** send routine specimens.
- Do not** send specimens because of a positive dipstick alone.

If you require IPC education as part of your annual update or evidence for CQC compliance, visit our innovative website for health and social care providers and see our award winning 'Preventing Infection Workbook and Guidance for Community Health and Social Care'.

We have also produced an excellent 'IPC CQC Inspection Preparation Pack for Care Homes' at only £69.99 to support you with your IPC requirements for CQC registration.

So have a look and see what you think!

www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk