

# IPC Advice Bulletin for staff providing Domiciliary Care (Care at Home) Issue No. 04 – May 2017

To support care 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

- ✓ Remind service users to drink enough fluid to produce a pale yellow coloured urine which flushes 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, but if unable to bathe, staff should wash the genital area daily with soap and warm water.

### Remind service users not to wait too long before going to the toilet to pass urine

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  $\frac{3}{4}$  full to prevent back flow of urine into the bladder.
- ✓ Attach the overnight bag to the leg bag to keep the original system intact.
- ✓ Ensure that the connection between the catheter and the urinary drainage system is not broken except for changing the bag.
- ✗ Never re-use an overnight bag.



### When to seek further support

If you have concerns that a service user has a UTI, the service user's GP should be informed.

**For catheterised service users**, seek further advice if they feel unwell, have a new or increased confusion or loss of diabetic control.

### References and further information

Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (2012) SIGN 88. *Management of suspected bacterial urinary tract infection in adults. A national clinical guideline.* Edinburgh: SIGN

Community Infection Prevention and Control (2014) *Urinary Catheter Passport: A guide to looking after a urinary catheter (for service users and healthcare workers)*

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: Guidance for staff providing Care at Home'.

So have a look and see what you think!

[www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk)