

<p>Drink water when you feel thirsty Urinate often and when the urge arises Consider limiting your caffeine intake</p>	
<p><b>Green Flags – All Clear</b> 🚩</p>	
<p><b>What this means:</b></p>	<p><b>If you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not have problems urinating</li> </ul>
<p>• You are taking steps towards your urinary health • Keep up the good work!</p>	
<p><b>Keep up the great work!</b></p>	
<p><b>Yellow Flags – Caution</b> 🚩</p>	
<p><b>What this means:</b></p>	<p><b>If you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have new urinary incontinence, dribbling urine</li> <li>Feel pain or burning when you urinate</li> <li>Have a fever, feel tired, or are shaky</li> <li>Feel you need to urinate often</li> <li>Feel pressure in your lower belly</li> <li>Have urine that smells bad, is cloudy, or reddish</li> <li>Feel pain in your back or side below the ribs</li> </ul>
<p>• You may have a urinary tract infection</p>	
<p>Call your doctor, nurse, or home health nurse if symptoms do not improve.</p>	
<p>Name:</p>	
<p>Number:</p>	
<p>Instructions:</p>	
<p><b>If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.</b></p>	
<p><b>Red Flags—Stop and Think</b> 🚩</p>	
<p><b>What this means:</b></p>	<p><b>If you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See red/bloody urine</li> <li>Feel nauseated or vomit</li> <li>Are unable to pass any urine</li> <li>Have mental changes or confusion</li> <li>Have a fever above 101 degrees</li> <li>Feel pain in the side, back, or groin</li> </ul>
<p>• You need to see a health care provider right away</p>	
<p>Follow these instructions: Call 9-1-1</p>	
<p>If possible, notify your health care provider's office:</p>	
<p>Physician:</p>	
<p>Number:</p>	
<p>Instructions:</p>	
<p><b>If you notice a Red Flag, call your physician immediately.</b></p>	

### UTI Fast Facts

- A urinary tract infection (UTI) means that bacteria got into the urinary tract. The urinary tract makes and stores urine and removes it from the body. Your kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra are all a part of the urinary system.
- Most infections are caused from bacteria that live in the bowel.
- Infections of the bladder are called “cystitis.” Infections of the urethra are called “urethritis.” Infection in one or both kidneys is called “pyelonephritis,” or kidney infection.
- Urinary tract infections are more common in women. After menopause, the risk for recurrent infections increases. The bladder becomes less elastic with age and may not empty completely.
- Sexual activity increases the likelihood of developing a UTI.
- Poor personal hygiene (for instance, wiping from back to front) increases the chance of bowel bacteria entering your urinary tract.
- Diabetes and other diseases that impair your immune system—the body’s defense against germs—can increase the risk of UTIs. Other things that can increase your risk include having bowel incontinence, being immobile for a long period of time, problems emptying your bladder completely, and having kidney stones.
- In men, having an enlarged prostate that blocks the flow of urine can contribute to UTI.
- Some people have a catheter (tube) placed during a hospital stay. Even after the catheter is removed, you are at risk for a UTI.
- People who can’t urinate on their own and use a tube (catheter) long-term have an increased risk of UTIs.
- Coffee, other forms of caffeine, alcohol, and dehydration can all aggravate the urinary tract.

### So, what can you do?

- Drink lots of fluids. Water is best. Try to drink 6–8 glasses a day (unless your health care provider tells you to limit fluids).
- Consider reducing the amount of caffeine you drink.
- Go to the bathroom when you have the urge to pass urine. Urinate frequently.
- Practice good hygiene before and after sexual activity.
- After using the toilet, always wipe from front to back. This is particularly important after you had a bowel movement.
- Wear cotton underwear and loose fitting clothing.
- If you are diabetic, keep your blood sugar under good control.
- Only use a catheter when indicated. It should be removed when it is no longer needed.
- If you are prescribed an antibiotic or other medication (e.g., sulfa), make sure you take it as prescribed. Do not skip doses and take it for the full amount of time prescribed by your health care provider.

## Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington

At the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities, we believe every adult deserves to live with dignity. We connect seniors, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to a full range of free and other community resources designed to offer you choice, improve your quality of life and respect your independence.

For more information, call Information and Assistance

**Clark County:** 360-694-8144—[iaclark@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:iaclark@dshs.wa.gov)

**Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties:** 360-577-4929—[iakelso@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:iakelso@dshs.wa.gov)

**Klickitat County:** Goldendale: 509-773-3757 White Salmon: 509-493-3068—  
[kcssinfo@klickitatcounty.org](mailto:kcssinfo@klickitatcounty.org)

**Skamania County:** 509-427-3990—[seniorsia@co.skamania.wa.gov](mailto:seniorsia@co.skamania.wa.gov)

[www.helpingelders.org](http://www.helpingelders.org)