PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET
Cystitis Treatment

Antibiotics for Water Infection
If you have a water infection and need antibiotics, your Pharmacist may be able to supply them. This is an antibiotic treatment without the need for a doctor's prescription.

The antibiotic supplied is called Trimethoprim. It is usually effective for simple water infections 8 to 9 times out of 10. Antibiotics usually start to work within a few hours.

Checks
Antibiotics are only available without a prescription to women who have had water infections before, and only to women who have had antibiotics for water infections before.

You will be asked to complete a short form before antibiotics can be supplied.

If your Pharmacist cannot supply antibiotics, it does NOT mean you do not need them. You should instead obtain them through a doctor or nurse in the normal way.

Cost
Obtaining antibiotics from your Pharmacist without a prescription is a private service, not paid for by the NHS. Your pharmacy will charge a fee for the service.

Your Pharmacist can supply only one course of antibiotic treatment in any two month period. Your GP's surgery will be informed each time antibiotic is supplied.

Water Infections
The most common symptoms of a water infection are pain or burning when passing water, passing water frequently and without being able to resist the urge to go. The urine is often cloudy or pink and often has an offensive smell. Some women are prone to water infections and get them repeatedly.

Water infections are inconvenient and can be unpleasant. They usually clear up quickly with treatment. Infections will sometimes clear up without antibiotics, simply by drinking plenty of liquids.

Infections in the urine occasionally pass up into the kidneys and cause a more serious infection known as pyelonephritis. There will be a high fever, usually with shivering. There is usually back pain in the kidney area, and aching and pains similar to severe flu. Infections in the kidneys are more serious than simple water infections and need urgent medical attention from a doctor or nurse.

Warnings
See a doctor urgently, even if you are already taking antibiotics, if you get:
- A high temperature (fever with shivering)
- Back pain in the kidney area
- Vomiting
- Rash (rash of any sort is important)
- Worsening symptoms
- Symptoms not improving 24 hours after starting antibiotics

Your Pharmacist CANNOT manage these warning problems, so consult a doctor or nurse.

Taking Trimethoprim
Your Pharmacist will supply a course of six trimethoprim tablets to be taken once twice daily for 3 days. Take your first tablet as soon as you can. Tablets can be taken with or without food and are best swallowed whole.

You should also drink plenty, at least 5 pints or 3 litres of fluids a day. It can sometimes help to drink cranberry juice or to add over-the-counter sachets to drinks, obtainable from pharmacies.

Treatment with trimethoprim should start to work within hours of the first tablet. Symptoms should have gone completely after 3 days, if not before. If infections are not improving as expected a doctor should be consulted.

Alternative Treatment
Not all water infections improve with trimethoprim treatment. Sometimes the bacteria causing infections are resistant to the antibiotic. There are alternative antibiotics which can be used to treat water infections. Pharmacists cannot supply these alternative antibiotics, only doctors or nurses.

Side Effects
You must read the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your tablets.

Antibiotics often cause some discomfort in the abdomen (tummy region) and loose motions. More significant side-effects are unusual. If a rash develops, trimethoprim should be stopped and a doctor should be consulted urgently.

Further Information
See the cystitis section of the NHS choices website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/cystitis

Patient Survey
We would greatly value your feedback on this service. You could also win £100 in our prize draw!

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