



Expert/ Education Patient Programme – Infection Prevention for Health and Wellbeing

1. *Drink plenty of water* - water is the best way for us to stay hydrated. We need to keep ourselves hydrated with water and the best way to do this is to sip/ drink water throughout the day and aim to drink 2 Litres of water a day. This will be about 8 glasses of water each day (250ml glasses) or 4 bottles of water (500ml bottles). Good hydration supports all systems of the body and helps to prevent tiredness and headaches and will also help to prevent infections. Ensure you always have a bottle of water at hand when you are away from home. If you are on a restricted fluid intake than adhere to your doctors advise. We often confuse thirst for hunger. If you feel hungry, have a drink first as you may be just thirsty. If you are discouraged from drinking water as it is too bland, then you may wish too add some flavoured squash to your glass of water, so that you can achieve your 8 glasses of water every day.
2. *Check the colour of your urine* - a good way of checking that you are drinking enough water throughout the day is to check the colour of your urine. If you are drinking enough water than your urine should be a very pale yellow colour. If your urine is an orange colour than you are not drinking enough and you may be dehydrated. You will than need to drink your 2 litres of water per day for the colour of your urine to change to a much lighter yellow colour, which will indicate that you are drinking enough water.
3. *Avoid Urinary Tract Infections* - these are more common for the over 50 age group, but they can also occur on occasions in younger people. You can do this by:
 - Drinking plenty of water to flush your bladder out and prevent any bacteria from adhering to the bladder wall and multiplying and causing an infection.
 - *Hygiene* - It is important that women after passing urine wipe themselves dry from front to back, to avoid any bacteria entering the bladder from the back passage and causing an infection.
 - Avoid holding on to a full bladder and delaying yourself going to the toilet, as this will increase your risk of an infection; go to the toilet as soon as you can when you feel the need to.

- *Avoid constipation*- as this will prevent your bladder emptying properly and this may increase your risk of developing a urinary tract infection. Constipation can be minimised with a high fibre diet that includes fruit and vegetables along with a good fluid intake of water.
 - *Ensure after sexual intercourse* that you visit the toilet and pass urine, as this will help to prevent urinary infections.
 - If you think that you may have a urinary tract infection (Urine Infection) than see your G.P but continue to drink plenty of water.
4. *Look after your skin* - it is important to maintain the integrity of the skin as any breaks in the skin may become infected or deteriorate. Bathe/shower regularly and after drying skin it is a good idea to moisturise the skin. As we get older our skin becomes drier and is than more likely to become damaged. If you notice any damage to your skin, boils, cuts etc that are not healing than please see your G.P.
 5. *Look after your teeth* - teeth and gums that are in poor condition can lead to mouth infections and can place you more at risk of blood poisoning(Septicaemia) and Endocarditis which is an infection / inflammation of the heart valves.
 6. *Look after your feet* - ensure toe nails are carefully cut to avoid cuts on the skin that can place you at risk of infections. Ensure your feet are kept clean and moisturise regularly. Treat any fungal infections and seek advice for any sores or wounds on your feet that are not healing.
 7. *Sexual Health*- in new relationships it is important to practise safer sex, with the use of male and female condoms in order to avoid Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Blood Borne viruses. If you think you may have an infection than please discuss with your G.P or attend a sexual Health Clinic.
 8. *Vaccinations* - if you have been advised to receive an annual flu jab, then please attend for this vaccination. The complications of Flu can be serious and life threatening. The flu vaccine is generally a very good match to the circulating flu viruses and will protect you from this highly infectious condition. If your doctor invites you for other vaccinations e.g Pneumococcal, HIB, Shingles, Tetanus then please attend as these are all given to maintain your wellbeing.

9. *Hand Hygiene* - it is important to have good hand hygiene in order to reduce the risk of infection to yourself and others. Wash your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet, before preparing food and after doing jobs that may contaminate your hands such as cleaning.

10. *Antibiotics*- doctors will always try and avoid giving you antibiotics and will only prescribe antibiotics if it is really necessary. This is because the more we use antibiotics the greater the chance of bacteria becoming resistant to them, so that the antibiotics no longer work on our infections. Antibiotics can also cause side effects such as rashes, thrush, stomach pains and diarrhoea. Milder infections such as the common cold and sore throats often get better without antibiotics, as your body can usually fight these infections on its own. If it is deemed necessary by your doctor for you to take antibiotics to treat an infection, than it is very important that you complete the course. If you experience more than one bout of diarrhoea whilst you are taking antibiotics or after you finish antibiotics than please see your G.P.

11. *Indwelling Devices*- If you have a urinary catheter, feeding tube or intravascular line, it is extremely important to maintain the hygiene measures that you or a carer have been taught, to prevent you getting infections from these devices being in place. Good hygiene measures at all times will considerably reduce the infection risks to you.

12. *Catching infections*- If you become unwell with diarrhoea or vomiting, then please try and maintain your fluids by sipping water. It is important for you not to spread the infection and stay at home whilst you are unwell. If you are having difficulty keeping your medication down and have other concerns about a chronic condition than please phone your doctor. If you are unwell and you think you may have flu than phone your doctor for advice. It is important for you not to spread the flu and to stay at home whilst you are unwell. Likewise do not visit family or friends if you know that they are unwell with an infectious condition, as this will place you at risk unnecessarily.