

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS?

by John Appleton

My interest in natural health leads me to research user friendly ways to address many health issues and I am often fielding questions about Urinary Tract Infections. While UTI is a very common disease affecting up to 50% of all women and girls during their lifetime it is not uncommon in men and boys. My elderly father in law was recently in hospital with a UTI which didn't respond very well to antibiotics. Each year in the U.S. UTI's are responsible for around 10 million doctor visits. Some people seem to be more susceptible than others and these people are likely to have recurrent infections.

UTI's can be annoying, very painful and if not treated properly, can lead to infection of the kidneys and thus serious consequences. So what is a UTI? Approximately 90% of cases are caused by the E. Coli bacteria which attaches itself to the inside lining of the Urinary tract. The outcome is inflammation and this is what causes the pain. Normally the urinary tract is an acidic and thus hostile environment for bacteria such as E.Coli so for the most part the bacteria are flushed out with the urine. Adult men have another safeguard with the prostate gland excreting a special bacterial growth inhibitor. E.Coli are also found in the digestive tract where they are regarded as friendly bacteria because they aid digestion. The problem especially with women seems to arise when E. Coli exit the GI tract and re-enter the body through the urinary tract.

Despite all the built in safeguards UTI's are becoming more and more common and one wonders if this might be have a lot to do with our addiction to sugars and refined carbohydrates. That's where I would put my money.

Standard treatment of UTI's is with antibiotics and while these are quite effective and often essential when treating the 10% of UTI's caused by other pathogens such as Chlamydia, antibiotics (which should be a last resort) may not be necessary for the 90% of infections caused by E.Coli.

Many women might reach for some Cranberry juice when faced with a UTI, and while real Cranberry juice may be helpful, products sold in stores often have a very high sugar content which would only exacerbate the problem. The answer – a simple sugar known as D-mannose (which is found in Cranberries and other fruits) which is similar to glucose but according to renowned American integrative doctor Jonathan Wright, "when this pleasant tasting sugar is consumed, 90% of UTI's can be resolved in 1-2 days and what's more with absolutely no side effects at all".

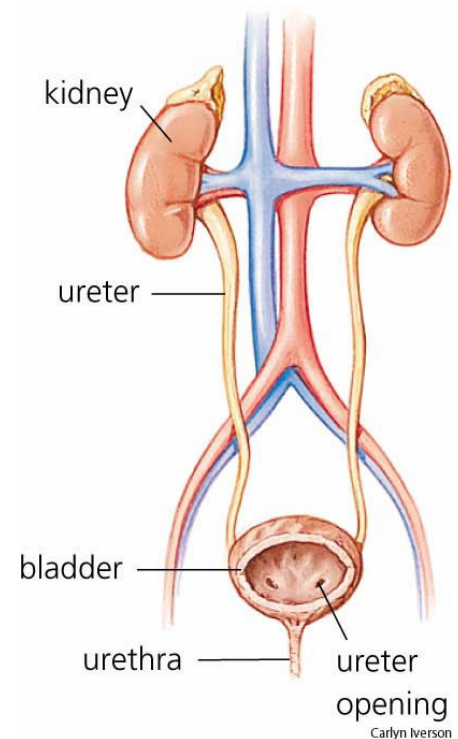


Fig. 2. Escherichia coli adhering to human intestinal cells.

Dr Wright says that although D-mannose is virtually unknown to practitioners of conventional medicine, many research reports have demonstrated its effectiveness against E.Coli. He says that 15 years of clinical experience have shown that D-mannose is almost as effective as antibiotics.

Unlike antibiotics which are not selective when they set about killing bacteria, D-mannose has a much more user friendly mode of action. D-mannose simply prevents the E.Coli bacteria from sticking to the walls of the urinary tract. When we ingest D-mannose it is absorbed in the upper gastro Intestinal tract much more slowly than glucose (8 times more slowly) and it is not converted to glycogen and stored like glucose. Instead it passes directly into the bloodstream where it is processed through the kidneys and ends up in the urine where it literally 'sugar coats' any free floating E.Coli and 'unsticks' E.Coli already attached to the inner surface of the bladder and urinary tract.

D-mannose is difficult to obtain in its pure form and anyone who would like more information should contact me. John Appleton - (09) 4899362 – 0800 754-673)
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