

# ARE ONLINE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS FOR URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS ACCURATE?

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One of the aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic is the increased use of Telehealth Medicine. At Pacific Coast Urology Medical Center and Western States HIFU, that is nothing new.



**W**e have been offering telehealth (communications) for more than 5 years! In fact, we are the first urology practice in the United States to do so.

As telehealth availability expands, it's important to keep in mind its limitations. Recently, a trusted associate sent me a link for a home use Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) diagnostic test. While I cannot attest to the accuracy or validity of this particular home UTI test, I do have some important points to give you.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT UTI'S AND TESTING

- 1) If the test results are valid, they are only appropriate for the occasional, **UNCOMPLICATED** UTIs that women get.
- 2) It is NEVER appropriate for a man – all male UTIs are typically due

to incomplete bladder emptying that is most often related to an enlarged prostate, requiring further evaluation. This condition is called BPH.

- 3) For the women that we see in our practice, they usually have a history of **COMPLICATED** UTIs with underlying causes including:
  - a. Narrow urethra - the mechanical obstruction of a narrow urethra at any age that prevents complete bladder emptying.
  - b. Underlying medical conditions like diabetes, kidney stones, etc.
  - c. Spinal cord problems – that prevent proper communication

between the brain and the bladder.

- d. Having repeated UTIs – infections that resolve with antibiotics, but reoccur.
- e. Having unresolved infections - infections that are not resolved with antibiotics.
- f. Being peri-menopausal, menopausal or post-menopausal. Hormone changes dramatically increase the likelihood of UTIs.
- g. Inadequate fluid intake.
- h. Being overweight.
- i. Urinary leakage (urinary incontinence) – the presence of urine in your underwear or “protective” garments can be an area of bacterial growth.
- j. Sexual activity.
- k. Stool leakage (fecal incontinence) – the presence of bacteria from feces can travel up into the bladder and cause infections.
- l. Pelvic radiation history.
- m. Where you live – if you are in an assisted living facility, the rate of recurrent infections is dramatically higher.

While these are just a few of the factors that can cause a UTI, please know that recurrent urinary tract infections:

- a. Can cause damage to your bladder and kidneys
- b. Can result in hospitalization
- c. Can increase antibiotic resistance

## RECOMMENDATIONS

If you have an uncomplicated UTI, talk to your primary care doctor about home-based tests.

If you have complicated UTIs, call us for an in-person or telehealth appointment because earlier interventions can prevent long-term complications.

CALL: 888- 735.4336 TO SCHEDULE YOUR TELEHEALTH CONSULTATION WITH DR. PUGACH AND EVANS TRAN, PA

Visit our website: [www.pacificcoasturology.com](http://www.pacificcoasturology.com)