Screening for Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

by Rosalyn Carson-DeWitt, MD

En Español (Spanish Version)

The purpose of screening is early diagnosis and treatment. Screening tests are usually administered to people without current symptoms, but who may be at high risk for certain diseases or conditions.

Screening Tests

Screening tests for urinary tract infection (UTI) include:

- Urine dip—This test is often done in your doctor’s office. A dipstick coated with special chemicals is dipped into the urine sample, and areas on it change color to indicate the presence of blood, pus, bacteria, or other materials. This is a very quick, general test.
- Microscopic urinalysis—The urine is examined under a microscope for the presence and quantity of such things as red blood cells, white blood cells (pus), bacteria, etc. This is a more accurate way to diagnose a urinary tract infection.

Screening Guidelines

There is no consensus as to whether healthy people should be screened for UTIs. At this point, it is common practice to regularly screen pregnant women in their first trimester of pregnancy. Some doctors also screen patients with diabetes for UTIs.

In fact, urine dip tests and urinalysis are frequently done as screening tests for conditions other than UTIs, like during well-child check-ups and other routine adult physical exams.

REFERENCES:


Griffith’s 5-Minute Clinical Consult. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2001.