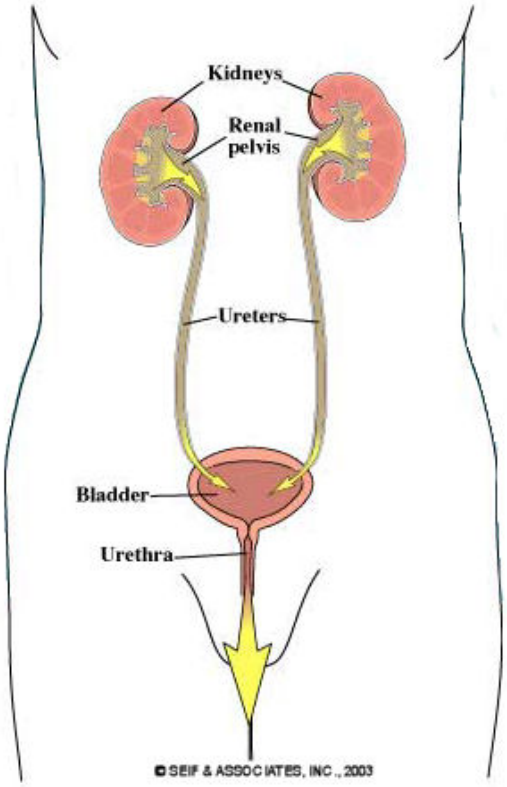
Pyelonephritis
(Kidney Infection)

In general there are 2 main types of kidney infections:
- Infections that come on quickly without any warning (acute pyelonephritis and acute kidney infection).
- Infection that persist for long periods of time (chronic pyelonephritis and chronic kidney infection).



CAUSES
Two main causes of kidney infection are:
- Bacteria traveling from the bladder to the kidney. This is a problem especially with pregnant women. The urine in the bladder can become filled with bacteria from multiple causes including:
  - Prostatitis.
  - Sexual intercourse in females.
  - Routine bladder infection also called cystitis.
- Bacteria traveling from the blood stream to the tissue part of the kidney.

Problems that may increase the risk of getting a kidney infection include:
- Diabetes.
- Kidney stones or bladder stones.
- Cancer.
- Catheters placed in the bladder.
- Other abnormalities of the kidney or ureter.

SYMPTOMS
- Abdominal pain.
- Pain in the side or flank area.
- Fever.
- Chills.
- Upset stomach.
- Blood in the urine (dark urine).
- Frequent urination.
- Strong or persistent urge to urinate.
- Burning or stinging when urinating.

The last three symptoms may occur first and may represent symptoms of the bladder infection which may occur prior to the kidney infection.

TREATMENT
In general the treatment depends on how severe the infection is.
- If it is mild and caught early the doctor may treat you with oral antibiotics and send you home.
- If the infection is more severe the bacteria may have gotten into the bloodstream. This will require intravenous antibiotics and a hospital stay. Symptoms may include:
  - High fever.
  - Severe flank pain.
  - Shaking chills.
- Even after a hospital stay the doctor may require you to be on oral antibiotics for a period of time.

- Other treatments may be required depending upon the cause of the infection.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Take all of the antibiotics given to you by the doctor
- Set up appointment to have the urine checked to make sure the infection is gone
- Drink plenty of fluids
- The doctor may also supply medicines for the bladder if you have urgency and frequency of urination.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a very high fever over 103º F (39.4º C).
- You are unable to take the antibiotics or fluids.
- If you develop shaking chills.
- You experience extreme weakness or fainting.
- There is no improvement after 2 days of treatment.

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