

# Bladder Infection or Something Else?

Four things we do in the first 24-48 hours in long-term care

If a resident's behaviour or health changes and they don't show the minimum signs of a bladder infection, we need to check for other causes. To make sure we understand what's happening, here is our plan for the first 24-48 hours:

## 1 Check what's changed:

### LOOK FOR:

- ☐ Changes in thinking/memory
- ☐ Tiredness/low energy
- ☐ Feeling weak
- ☐ Falls
- ☐ General discomfort/feeling unwell
- ☐ Mood change/increase in aggression
- ☐ Less ability to perform activities (functional status)

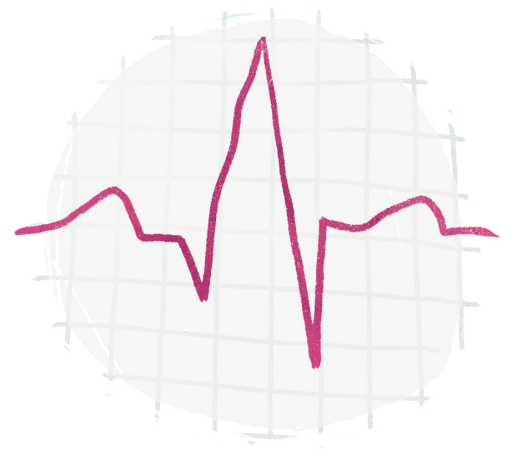
### SEE IF THESE ARE SIGNS OF:

- ☐ Infections (respiratory, skin, or GI)
- ☐ Not enough fluids (dehydration)
- ☐ Medication interactions/side effects
- ☐ Not enough oxygen in the body (hypoxia)
- ☐ Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)
- ☐ Unable to pee (urinary retention)
- ☐ Constipation

## 2 Watch and care:

- ☐ Look for changes in alertness or awareness
- ☐ Check vital signs more often (temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing)
- ☐ Encourage more fluids as often as resident can handle:
  - Drinking 1 litre (1L) of fluids over 24 hours (about 50-100 mL per hour when awake)

If any of these symptoms get worse, tell the health care provider (for example: doctor, nurse) right away.



### 3 Check for bladder infection:

To rule out a bladder infection, we won't use a urine dipstick test because it's not helpful for older adults over 65. Instead, we'll check for the **minimum signs** of a bladder infection before sending the urine to a lab:



#### No catheter

Minimum signs include:



Sudden pain/burning while urinating

#### Or at least two of these:



Fever over 37.9°C (100°F) or rises by 1.5°C (2.4°F) at least twice in 12 hours



Having to urinate more often or right away



Blood in urine (gross hematuria)



Pain in the lower belly area (suprapubic pain)



Pain in the side/back area (flank pain)



Leaking urine you can't control (urinary incontinence)



**Don't meet minimum signs?** A health care provider will do an assessment to check for other causes.



#### Catheter

Minimum signs include:



Fever over 37.9°C (100°F) or rises by 1.5°C (2.4°F) at least twice in 12 hours



Pain in the side/back area (flank pain)



Shaking chills



Sudden confusion/trouble thinking clearly/can't focus (delirium)



**Don't meet minimum signs?** A health care provider will do an assessment to check for other causes.

If a patient **meets minimum signs**, urine will be sent to the lab. A health care provider should be notified to decide if antibiotics are needed while waiting for the lab results.

#### Not signs of a bladder infection:



Dark/cloudy or smelly urine alone



Change in mental state alone

### 4 Plan next steps:

**Symptoms better?** If the symptoms get better or go away within 48 hours, it's unlikely it is an infection. The resident will be continuously checked on to make sure they feel better.

**Symptoms worse?** If the symptoms are staying the same or getting worse, and the patient does not meet the minimum signs for a bladder infection, a health care provider will perform an assessment.