



Don't Let It Hold You Back

A guide to common female urological issues
and what you can do about them.

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You're Not Alone

Frequently asked urological questions

Sure, there are a lot of good things about being a woman: More diverse clothing choices, the thrill of childbirth, “the prerogative to have a little fun,” as the song says. But being a female does come with challenges. For example, we're twice as likely as men to experience urinary incontinence, and five times more likely to suffer from urinary tract infections. Think the playing field is leveled somewhat when it comes to kidney stones? Think again. Women get them, too.

If all these unpleasant ailments weren't enough, to get the treatment you deserve requires a potentially embarrassing conversation with your doctor. And let's be honest. No one wants to talk about leaking. Or burning. Or mysterious pelvic pain. But take heart: while the conversation might be embarrassing for you, chances are good that your doctor has heard it all before.

In this guide, we will cover some of the most common urological questions women have. We will provide a brief overview of issues and symptoms, give tips from **Dr. Thomas Wood, urologist at Reedsburg Area Medical Center**, and discuss treatment options. Topics follow the most frequently asked questions urologists hear from their female patients:

- Is my urinary incontinence bad enough to be treated?
- I get frequent UTIs. Is it just bad luck, or a sign of something more serious?
- How can I prevent kidney stones?
- I'm fine, but my husband is up every hour to go to the bathroom. What can I do?

We hope to answer your questions and empower you to speak up and get the treatment you deserve to live your best life—always.

A photograph of a woman from the waist down, wearing a brown sweater, black tights, and black high-heeled shoes. She is carrying several colorful shopping bags, including one with a floral pattern and another with a rainbow pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Incontinence

What is female urinary incontinence?

Feeling like you always have to “go”? You may have female urinary incontinence. It can range from leaking a few drops of urine when laughing or sneezing, to wetting through your pants. Female urinary incontinence can be caused by pregnancy, childbirth, aging, or lifestyle. Getting educated now will help you be ready for the future.

Incontinence

Symptom checklist

These symptoms indicate urinary incontinence.

They do not all need to be present to signal a problem.

- Urine leaking when pressure is exerted on your bladder. This can happen when sneezing, laughing, or exercising.
- Urinating often, including throughout the night, because of sudden and intense urges. The urges may be accompanied by leaking.
- Constant dribbling because your bladder isn't emptying fully.

When to make an appointment with a doctor

If incontinence starts to affect your daily life and prevents you from socializing or doing the things you used to love, make an appointment. It's not worth missing out on the fun—especially as there are a variety of treatment options available. Urinary incontinence may be a fact of life, but it doesn't have to persist in yours.



Treatment Options

A leak-free life could be just an appointment away. Your doctor will ask questions and perform tests to rule out any serious underlying causes. Treatments can range from lifestyle changes and exercises, to medications, electrical stimulation, implants, injections, and surgery.

“Many women suffer from this easily treatable problem for years before they decide to see a doctor about it. Since symptoms here impact daily life so much, we urge patients to get treated sooner than later.”

–Dr. Thomas Wood

Urinary Tract Infections



What is a urinary tract infection?

Anyone who's ever had a UTI knows that they are more than an inconvenience that lands you in the doctor's office or, if it's after hours, the emergency room. They can be excruciatingly painful. UTIs occur most commonly when the urethra becomes irritated. This is frequently the result of sexual activity, though other factors like diet, age, lifestyle, and stress can also cause UTIs. They are easily treatable, though complications can occur if the infection spreads to the kidneys or other parts of the body.

Urinary Track Infection

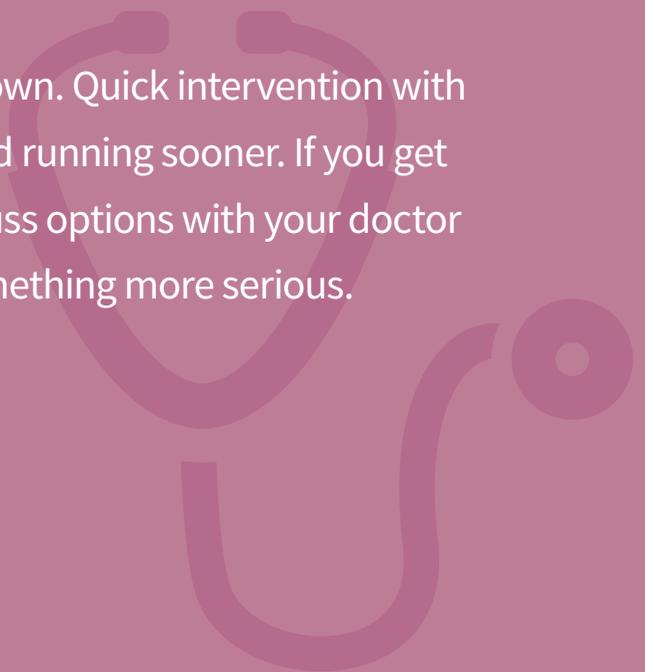
Symptom checklist

UTIs are often mistaken for other pelvic ailments. Watch for these signs:

- Frequent urge to urinate
- Painful, burning feeling when urinating
- Cloudy urine
- Dark urine, blood in urine
- Chills, fever, lower back pain

When to make an appointment with a doctor

UTIs rarely go away on their own. Quick intervention with antibiotics can get you up and running sooner. If you get frequent UTIs, however, discuss options with your doctor as they could be a sign of something more serious.



Treatment Options

Antibiotics fight the infection and are a common treatment for UTIs. Your doctor may also suggest lifestyle changes and tips like urinating as soon as possible after sexual activity, wearing breathable, cotton underwear, and drinking plenty of liquids.

“With UTIs, prevention is the name of the game. Practice good habits to diminish your chances of getting one.”

–Dr. Thomas Wood



Quiz your UTI IQ!

Answer these questions to test your knowledge on UTIs:



1. True or false? It doesn't matter what you're drinking as long as you're staying hydrated.

A. **False**—hydrating is key to a healthy system. Drink water whenever possible, or cranberry juice if you suspect a UTI might be developing. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which can make things worse.

2. True or false? Douching and bathing can help maintain your system's health.

A. **False**—feeling clean isn't the same as practicing good hygiene. Douches and certain bath soaps contain chemicals that can irritate your urinary tract and make you more vulnerable to UTIs.

3. True or false? Tight leather pants are a UTI waiting to happen.

A. **True**—wear whatever cute clothes you've got, but be sure to limit your interaction with fabrics that don't breathe. Out for an evening? Sure. Out till dawn? Bring a change of clothes.

4. True or false? Going to the bathroom right after sex is a mood killer.

A. **False**—going to the bathroom right after sex can prevent UTIs, which are themselves the ultimate mood killer. Take a quick trip to the bathroom and save yourself trouble later on.

5. True or false? If you're on antibiotics for a UTI and you're feeling better, you can resume sexual activity.

A. **False**—give your body time to recover! It's great that you're feeling better, but give yourself enough time to not encounter a UTI repeat performance.

Kidney Stones



What are kidney stones?

Under normal circumstances, your urine has the right balance of chemicals to break down deposits that cause kidney stones. Unfortunately, when those chemicals are out of sync, crystals can form. These often pass through the urinary tract without being detected, but if they reach a certain size, they become very painful kidney stones.

Kidney Stone

Symptom checklist

If you have a kidney stone large enough to feel, pain will be your first symptom.

- ✔ Sudden onset extreme pain usually starts with sharp cramps in the back and side, or in the lower abdomen.
- ✔ This may be accompanied by nausea and vomiting, but not always.
- ✔ Pain may spread to the groin as the stone travels through the body.
- ✔ Blood may also appear in the urine.
- ✔ Increased need to urinate or burning during urination.

When to make an appointment with a doctor

You may have heard of people having luck “toughing it out” at home, but it’s better to be safe than sorry, especially if you are experiencing fever or chills at any point. It’s not worth the risk of an infection or complications, so call your doctor.



Treatment Options

Avoiding certain foods may help prevent kidney stones, but in the event that you are experiencing one and it is not passing on its own, a more aggressive treatment may be required. Luckily, we've come a long way since the days of invasive surgery and 4-6 weeks of recovery. Doctors now have targeted, sophisticated methods of treating kidney stones.

“While we don’t know the exact cause of kidney stones, we do know that people with a family history of them are more likely to get them. And unfortunately, women who have had them in the past are more likely to get them again.”

–Dr. Thomas Wood

For Your Spouse



Are *his* urological issues becoming *your* problem?

You're doing fine. You eat right, take care of yourself. But you're still up half the night. You're still not living your best life. Why? Your partner has problems. Maybe it's his prostate, or maybe it's his sexual functioning. Men experience plenty of urological issues, too, and believe it or not, they can be awfully stubborn when it comes to talking about it or actually scheduling a doctor's appointment.

Start the conversation

We all know that talking urology can be uncomfortable. If you're unsure how to approach the subject, see if any of these conversation starters might work for you.

- “I bet it’s really annoying, having to get up and go to the bathroom so many times during the night. Why don’t you make an appointment with your doctor? I bet there are easy solutions for this.”
- “My friend/sister/cousin’s husband finally went to the urologist about his enlarged prostate and guess what? He’s getting treatment and they’re both a lot happier.”
- “I’ve taken the liberty of making an appointment with the urologist for our problem. The nurse said it’s something they handle every day and it’s so not a big deal. I look forward to hearing all about it.”
- “I’ve always been so proud of you for facing problems head on. Thanks for handling this one soon!”

“Don’t wait! Whether it’s an enlarged prostate or a sexual health issue, the sooner you make an appointment, the sooner you can get back to your life.”

–Dr. Thomas Wood

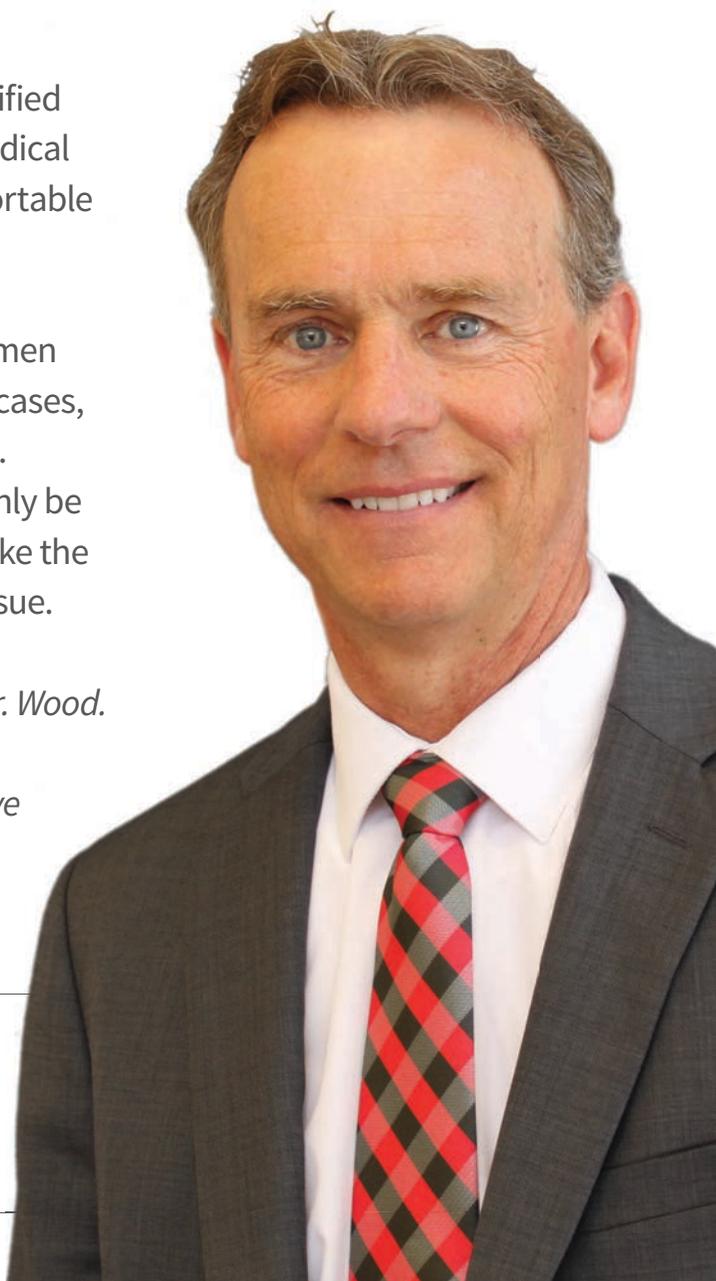
Dr. Thomas Wood, your urology expert.

**Make an appointment today to start on the
path to urological health**

Dr. Thomas Wood, a board certified urologist at Reedsburg Area Medical Center, wants you to feel comfortable asking him anything. After all, urological issues are common, and you're not alone. Many women experience them, and in many cases, the condition is easily treatable. But successful outcomes can only be found if a patient is willing to take the first steps and talk about the issue.

*"I'm a patient advocate," says Dr. Wood.
"I am here to not only increase a
patient's longevity but to improve
their lifestyle, confidence and
quality of life."*

**Call Dr. Thomas Wood at
608-768-3900 to schedule
an appointment today.**



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