Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Escherichia coli (E. coli) Urinary Tract

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Escherichia coli (E. coli) Urinary Tract

Patient and Carer Information

Infection Prevention Control Team

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What is E. coli?

E. coli is a common bacteria that lives in the intestinal tract of animals and humans. E. coli can be found in faeces and can survive in the environment. Although this bacterium lives normally in your intestines, E. coli have the ability to cause a variety of infections. These include:

- Gastrointestinal disease,
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Bacteraemia (blood stream infections).

There are many forms of E. coli but for the purposes of this leaflet we will be focusing on urinary tract E. coli.

Can E. coli be transmitted?

Most people carry harmless strains of E. coli in their intestine – known as colonisation.

Person-to-person transmission can occur through the oral-faecal route.

E. coli can be transmitted to others via poor hand hygiene, contaminated equipment and environmental contamination.

Good personal hygiene, good hand hygiene with liquid soap and running water and an increase in fluids often help to prevent E.coli colonisation turning into an infection.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Generally feeling unwell
- Fever / rigors (e.g. high temperature, shivering)
- Altered mental state (e.g. confusion)
- Reduced mobility
- Headache
- Pelvic pain
- Loin pain
- Frequency in passing urine
- Burning sensation when passing urine
- Offensive smell or colour
- Haematuria (blood in the urine)

How is urinary tract E. coli diagnosed and treated?

A urine sample is obtained and sent to the microbiology laboratory for testing. The results are normally known within 2 to 5 days.

People who are colonised with E. coli do not generally require any treatment.

Only if they show signs and symptoms of an infection will they be prescribed antibiotic treatment by a healthcare professional. It is important if commenced on antibiotics that they

fully complete the antibiotic course prescribed.

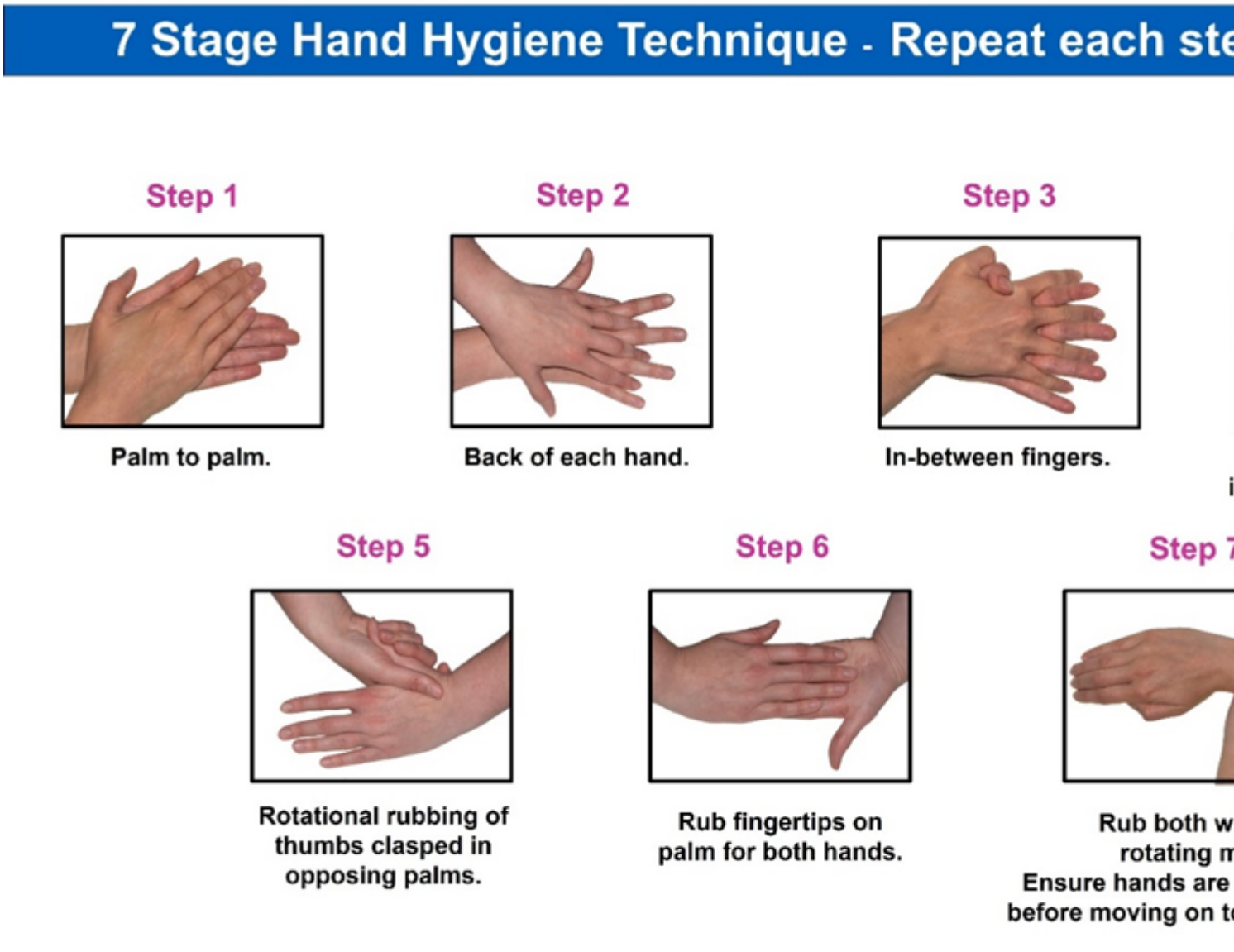
How can recurring infections be prevented?

Recurring infections can be prevented by:

- Drinking plenty of fluids to stay hydrated e.g. water, tea, coffee, fruit juice.
- Wiping yourself from front to back when cleaning/washing.
- Washing your hands after using the toilet with soap and water.
- Eating a well-balanced diet to prevent constipation.

Hand washing

The correct method of washing your hands is shown below:



How to contact us

If you have any questions or would like further information about urinary tract E.coli please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff during your hospital stay or community visit. Alternatively contact your general practitioner.



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