UTI Laboratory Testing Guide for the Elderly

Clinical Presentation: Asymptomatic*

NO signs or symptoms of a UTI.
NO urine test is required for:

- **Smelly urine**
- **Cloudy urine**
- **Concentrated urine**

DO NOT perform a dipstick urinalysis

DO NOT perform a routine dipstick urinalysis. Abnormal dipstick results (e.g. positive leucocytes, nitrite) **cannot** predict a UTI because many elderly have asymptomatic bacteriuria.
Focus on the clinical symptoms.

Clinical Presentation: Symptomatic

Symptoms include but not limited to the following:

- **Fever or chills**
- **Burning pain when passing urine, dysuria, frequency, urgency**
- **Abdominal pain or tenderness**
- **Haematuria**
- **Decreased level of consciousness**
- **Increased confusion (if other causes excluded)**

NO clinical reason for testing

Empiric treatment#
NO Laboratory testing

- Classic symptoms
- Normal urinary tract
- No recent instrumentation
- No complicating factors

Empiric treatment#
Laboratory testing recommended

- Male
- Pyelonephritis
- Treatment failure
- Hospital-acquired
- Immunocompromised
- History of recurrent UTIs or MDRO (note this may affect empiric treatment)

NO Urine to Laboratory

Urine to Laboratory Include:

- Urine type (e.g. MSU, CSU, Clean catch)
- Tests required (e.g. M, C & S)
- ***Clinical details & treatment (compulsory)***

*Screening for **asymptomatic bacteriuria** is **NOT** recommended in elderly patients including those with **indwelling catheter and spinal cord injuries.**

#Treatment recommendations, please refer to BPAC or Te Whata Kura guidelines.

References: "Urinary tract infections (UTIs) – an overview of lower UTI management in adults". https://bpac.org.nz/2021/uti.aspx
"A pragmatic guide to asymptomatic bacteriuria and testing for urinary tract infections (UTIs) in people aged over 65 years" https://bpac.org.nz/BT/2015/July/guide.aspx
"bpac Primary Care Antibiotic Guide" https://bpac.org.nz/antibiotics/guide.
IDSA 2025 Guideline Update on Complicated Urinary Tract Infections. https://www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/complicated-urinary-tract-infections/

July 2026

pathlab