

# Treating Asymptomatic Bacteriuria

## Frequently Asked Questions



### How prevalent is asymptomatic bacteriuria?

- In seniors over 80 years, it can be seen in as many as 50% of long-term care patients and as many as 19% of those in the community



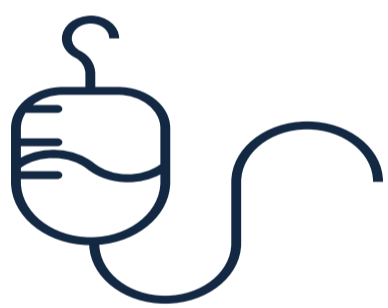
### How should a positive urine test be approached when collected for no apparent reason?

- Treatment decisions should not be made based on test results alone
- Evaluate the patient clinically and consider a period of observation for development of specific signs or symptoms of UTI prior to the initiation of antibiotics



### Should antibiotics be initiated if there is a positive urine culture and abnormal urinalysis (positive nitrates or leukocytes, increased white blood cells or pyuria)?

- Positive urine culture and abnormal urinalysis in a patient without symptoms is consistent with asymptomatic bacteriuria, which would be considered colonization and not a true infection
- Treatment with antibiotics is not indicated



### Does a patient with a chronic indwelling catheter that has a positive urine culture require antibiotics?

- A chronic indwelling catheter is commonly associated with bacteriuria
- There is no need to treat unless the patient has specific symptoms of UTI



### If an elderly patient presents with no specific symptoms except a change in mental status or delirium, should UTI treatment be initiated?

- UTI is much less likely without specific urinary symptoms or sepsis symptoms
- Non-specific symptoms, such as a change in mental status, delirium, fatigue, or a fall may be due to a variety of non-infectious causes, including: pain, depression, constipation, dehydration, poor sleep, or medication side effects



### What should be done when a patient's family wants a urine test and antibiotic treatment in the setting of asymptomatic bacteriuria?

- Educate the family about the prevalence of asymptomatic bacteriuria, and tell them you do not suspect UTI on clinical grounds
- Emphasize the dangers of antibiotic overuse, such as resistance and side effects
- Antibiotics have not been shown to provide any benefit in asymptomatic bacteriuria, and thus antibiotics cause only risk with no benefit