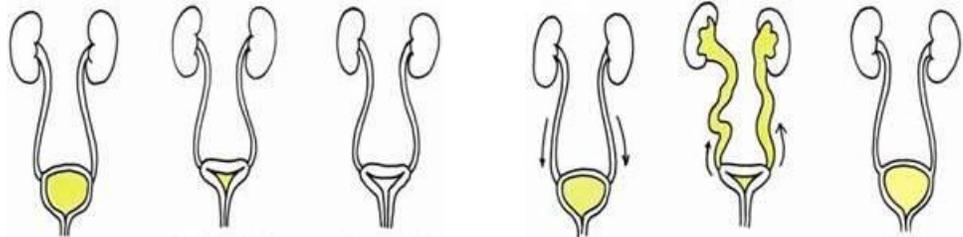


Urinary Reflux

What is urinary reflux?

Urine is made by the kidneys and travels down a tube called the ureter to be stored in the bladder. Normally, the urine flows one way. If your child has reflux, urine can flow back up from the bladder into the kidneys.



Normal urinary function: urine flowing from the bladder out of the body.

Urinary reflux: Urine flowing back up from the bladder to the kidneys, then back to the bladder.

How serious is reflux?

By itself, reflux is not harmful to the kidneys. It can become a problem if there is an infection in the urinary tract. That is because bacteria in the bladder can travel up and infect your child's kidneys. Kidney infections can scar the kidneys. Reflux is graded on a scale of 1 to 5. Grade 1 reflux is the most mild, and grade 5 is the most serious. Reflux can occur on one or both sides.

How is reflux treated?

Your child's healthcare team will observe your child for a period of time. The urologist will order radiology testing and clinic visits every 12 to 18 months. Some children may need a low dose of daily antibiotics to keep them from getting infections. Your urologist will tell you whether this is appropriate for your child.

If your child is taking a daily dose of antibiotic, it is very important for them to take it every day. Bedtime is the best time to give it to your child.

Some children may need surgery to fix urinary reflux, while other children will not. Many children outgrow it.

What are the signs of a bladder infection?

- Fever
- Irritability or feeling cranky
- Urine that smells bad
- Wetting pants or underpants
- Pain when peeing

If your child starts to get these symptoms, call your child's doctor and have your child tested for a urinary tract infection (UTI).

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To Learn More

- Urology Clinic
206-987-2509 (Weekdays)
206-987-2000 (Evenings / Weekends)
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

What are the signs of a kidney infection?

- Vomiting
- Side (flank) pain
- High fever

Kidney infections should be treated immediately. Call your child's primary care doctor right away if your child has these symptoms.

Follow up

Your child's urologist will monitor your child every 12 to 18 months with radiologic testing. This may include:

- A renal ultrasound to check for kidney growth and scarring
- A test called a "voiding cysto urethrogram" (VCUG) to find out the grade of reflux

Your child's primary care provider should monitor your child with routine urine tests if your child is ill. If your child is on a daily antibiotic, they may need blood work checked every 6 months.

Resources

- Voiding Cysto Urethrogram (VCUG): Preparing Your Child For a Bladder Test (PDF) seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE021.pdf
- Hydronephrosis (PDF) seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1320.pdf