Bacteria in the Urine ≠ UTI

What is asymptomatic bacteriuria?

Asymptomatic bacteriuria (ASB) means that bacteria are present in urine, but the person is not experiencing any symptoms.

Is ASB different than a urinary tract infection (UTI)?

Yes. When a person has a UTI, not only are bacteria present in the urine, but the person is also experiencing signs and symptoms of infection, such as:

- Painful urination.
- Urgency to go.
- Urinating more often.
- Pain above the pubic bone.
- Middle to lower back pain.
- Loss of bladder control.

If you have or develop any of these symptoms, seek medical attention.

Who is most affected by ASB?

Anyone can experience ASB, but women are most affected.



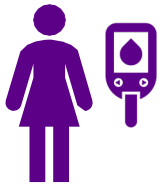
Healthy premenopausal women

1–5% experience ASB



Healthy postmenopausal women

3–9% experience ASB



Women with diabetes

11–16% experience ASB



Elderly women in the community

11–16% experience ASB



Elderly women in long-term care

25–50% experience ASB

Does ASB need to be treated?

Most people with ASB do not need an antibiotic.

Studies show that treatment of ASB does not prevent UTIs or prevent ASB in the future. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed can lead to negative side effects and the development of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance is when germs develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them.

People who are pregnant, have had a recent kidney transplant, or those undergoing a procedure of the urinary system may require treatment for ASB. **Treatment decisions will be made by your health care provider.**

Where can I find more information?

Visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Use Antibiotics Safely webpage.

Division of Public Health
Healthcare-Associated Infections Prevention Program
dhs.wi.gov/hai/index.htm

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