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Myth: We get UTIs only from sex.

You probably know the symptoms of a UTI: that need to pee right now and the burning sensation when you do. But you may not know why you get these infections or how to stop them. We're busting six UTI myths wide open.

Myth: Cranberry juice prevents UTIs.

Sorry, holiday beverages. "One theory was that cranberry juice altered your urine's pH level, making it more acidic and a less hospitable environment for bacteria," says Deepak A. Kapoor, M.D., president of Advanced Urology Centers of New York. But a large-scale review concluded that cranberry juice didn't really reduce the occurrence of UTIs. Stick to regular old H₂O. "It will flush out the bladder without any sugar or artificial ingredients," says Dr. Kapoor.

Myth: Peeing before and after sex prevents infection.

Hit the bathroom before and after sex, and you're in the clear, right? Unfortunately, there's never been great research that proves this habit reduces your chances of getting a UTI. Does do recommend peeing, but only after sex, saying it can't hurt. "But if you urinate before sex, it's hard to urinate after, and you want a steady stream of urine to flush out bacteria," says Dr. Kapoor.

Myth: UTIs are contagious.

Noope. While UTIs can be triggered by sex, your partner doesn't pass on the bacteria. "Bacteria living near the vulva and the opening to the urethra get pushed inside [the bladder] by intercourse," explains Dr. Dubney. But it's easy to see how this myth started: We often get UTIs when we have sex for the first time after a long break, or after hooking up with someone new. "When you change partners, sex becomes different," Dr. Kapoor says. "The length and girth of his penis and the way you both move during intercourse can affect how much bacteria gets swept into your urinary tract. As a result, you may find that you're more or less likely to get an infection."