

# Warning Signs of a Urinary Tract Infection

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs), while easy to cure, are often harder to diagnose in the senior citizen population and can be potentially life-threatening to elderly individuals if left untreated. And because they can often cause behavioral changes that mimic those of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, it is important to know and be able to spot the warning signs of a UTI to avoid misdiagnosis.

**Certain UTI symptoms are easier to detect in seniors than others. The following are some common symptoms and behaviors that often accompany UTIs in elderly persons:**

- Agitation
- Hallucinations
- Falling
- A confused, or delirium-like state
- Other behavioral changes
- Poor motor skills or dizziness

Additionally, there are some UTI symptoms that may be present, but often go unreported by elderly individuals, including:

- Strong-smelling urine
- Pelvic pressure
- Fever
- Pain with urination
- Night sweats
- Cloudy or bloody urine

*(NOTE: A fever may not be present in some seniors with UTIs due to a weakened immune system.)*

## How Do Seniors Develop UTIs?

According to the National Institutes of Health, the following conditions make the elderly more susceptible to UTIs than younger people:

- Diabetes
- Use of a catheter
- Enlarged prostate
- Kidney stones
- An inability to fully empty the bladder
- Bowel incontinence
- Immobility

If any of these symptoms are noted, bring them to the attention of the person's physician immediately, as an untreated UTI can lead to dangerous health complications. **Continuum** provides in-home care services that can help prevent UTIs such as health monitoring, preparing healthy, bladder-friendly meals, and encouraging fluid intake throughout the day.

