



Kidney Infection (Pyelonephritis)



Overview

This is an infection of one or both of your kidneys. These are the organs that filter your blood to produce urine. A kidney infection is a serious medical condition that requires prompt care.

Causes

A kidney infection is caused by bacteria or by a virus. A bacterium called "E. coli" is a common culprit. It can enter your urethra. This is the passageway through which urine leaves your body. The infection can spread from your urethra up to your bladder. It can travel up through your ureters to your kidneys, where it multiplies. Bacteria and viruses can also enter your kidneys through your bloodstream, but this is rare.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a kidney infection may include fever and pain. Your back, side, or groin may hurt. You may feel a frequent urge to urinate. You may feel a burning sensation when you urinate. Your urine may contain blood or pus. It may be cloudy, and it may smell bad. Without proper treatment, a kidney infection can cause serious complications. It can permanently damage your kidneys.

Treatment

Kidney infections are treated with medication. If your symptoms are severe, you may need to be hospitalized. If you have a medical problem that is causing your infection, you may need treatment to correct this problem. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.

