

# Reunions can trigger health issues

by Kamryn Jaroszewski

Paraglide

When Soldiers redeploy often the first things on their minds are showers, food and intimate time with their spouse or significant other. Going from a long period of abstinence to frequent intercourse can trigger the "honeymoon disease," otherwise known as a urinary tract infection.

"When loved ones return from deployment and women resume relations, the dormant bacteria present at the perineum are pushed into the urethra during intercourse," said Capt. J. Thomas Johnston, certified nurse midwife at Womack Army Medical Center. "Once in the urethra, they have a fertile environment to grow and multiply."

Some women think drinking cranberry juice will cure a UTI. Johnston said that's not the case, although they will help prevent them — any citrus fruit or vitamin C increases the protective acidity of the urine and keeps the bad bacteria at bay.

There are easy tips women can fol-

low to help prevent a UTI:

- Drink plenty of fluids to keep the urinary system flushed out and clean. It may also help to empty your bladder after intercourse to flush out any bacteria that may have entered the urethra.

- Wear underwear with a cotton center. Cotton breathes while other fabrics can trap moisture and promote bacterial growth.

- Practice good hygiene. After a bowel movement or urinating, wipe from front to back. It may also be beneficial to wash the area before and after intercourse.

Symptoms of urinary tract infections include frequent, sudden and powerful urges to urinate; sharp or stinging pain with urination; bladder tenderness and possibly a little blood in the urine.

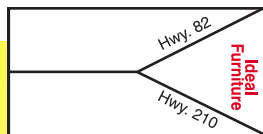
Johnston stressed the importance of prevention through good hygiene and diet.

"If a woman feels a UTI coming on, it's important to take action before things get bad and make an appointment to see your provider," he said.



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