

BLOOD IN THE URINE

ALTHOUGH HARMLESS IN MOST CASES, BLOOD IN THE URINE COULD BE SYMPTOMATIC OF MORE SERIOUS CONDITIONS.

Blood in the urine is known as haematuria. The urine could appear in a range of colours, from pink to red to brown.

Although harmless in most cases, it could be symptomatic of an underlying condition, such as:

- **Urinary tract infections (UTI)** Other UTI symptoms are the urge to urinate, pain and burning with urination, and unusually malodorous urine. In older adults, the only sign of illness may be microscopic blood.
- **Kidney infections** Symptoms are similar to bladder infections, although it's often accompanied by fever and pain on the side of the tummy.
- **Bladder or kidney stones** While painless unless they cause a blockage or are being passed, bladder or kidney stones can cause both gross (visible) and microscopic bleeding.
- **Enlarged prostate** Symptoms include difficulty urinating, an urgent or persistent need to urinate, and either visible or microscopic blood in the urine. Prostate infection can cause the same symptoms.
- **Kidney disease** Microscopic urinary bleeding is a symptom of glomerulonephritis, which is inflammation of the kidneys' filtering system.
- **Cancer** Visible urinary bleeding may be a sign of kidney, prostate or — especially — bladder cancer.
- **Inherited disorders** Sickle cell anaemia and Alport syndrome can cause visible and microscopic haematuria.
- **Kidney injury** Kidney injuries can cause blood in your urine.
- **Strenuous exercise** Trauma



to the bladder, dehydration or the breakdown of red blood cells that occurs with sustained aerobic exercise may lead to gross haematuria. Long-distance runners and cyclists are most susceptible.

- **Diet and medications** Red pigment from food dyes, medications, and eating excessive amounts of beetroot can cause urine to seem bloody.

TREATMENT

See a urologist for further investigation if you have noticeable blood in the urine without pain, or are 40 years or older and have recurring UTI or have unexplained blood in your urine.

The focus is to confirm the haematuria, then identify the bleeding location via an X-ray of the kidneys (upper urinary tract) and an endoscopic examination of the bladder (lower urinary tract) under local anaesthesia with or without intravenous sedation.

If no underlying cause is found, you may be asked to have follow-up urine testing and blood pressure monitoring every three to six months, especially if you are at risk of bladder cancer. Bladder cancer risk factors include being male, above 40 years old, smoking, and have past exposure to chemicals, dyes and petroleum products.

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Dr Damian Png specialises in minimally invasive urology, reconstructive urology, urinary stone treatment, prostate conditions and urinary strictures. A long-time academic at the National University Hospital and National University of Singapore, he has conducted multicentre trials and published extensively.

SERVICES

- Urological evaluation and surgery
- Kidney, bladder and prostate treatment
- Laparoscopic and endoscopic surgery
- Surgery (penile, testicular and scrotal)
- Vasectomy and reversal
- Varicocele
- Robotic radical prostatectomy/surgery
- Men's health issues