

COPING WITH INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS

Interstitial Cystitis (IC) is a Chronic, Painful Bladder Condition.

Interstitial Cystitis is Common and Affects Over 6 Million Men and Women in the U.S.

Interstitial Cystitis (IC), or painful bladder syndrome, is a chronic condition that causes bladder pressure and pain. IC affects women more often than men and symptoms can have a lasting impact on those who suffer from the condition.

Please read the following summary to understand symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options for Interstitial Cystitis.

01 | Symptoms

When the bladder is empty, the muscles are relaxed. Nerve signals in the brain let you know when the bladder is getting full, which will cause the bladder muscles to contract. With IC, there is a dysfunction of the bladder causing the urgency to urinate more often and with smaller volumes than most people. The severity of symptoms may vary and may flare in response to triggers such as menstruation, prolonged sitting, stress, exercise and sexual activity. Common symptoms include:

- Pelvic or perineal pain
- Frequent urination, up to 60 times per day
- Pain or discomfort while the bladder fills
- Pain during intercourse

02 | Diagnosis

There is no specific test used to diagnose IC. Your healthcare provider will need to rule out other health issues that may be causing symptoms. A physical and neurological exam will be performed as well as baseline pain and voiding tests to rule out other urological conditions. Other tests that may be performed include:

- **Urodynamic Evaluation** – to measure bladder pressure as the bladder fills and empties
- **Cystoscopy** – using a special tool, your physician can examine the bladder and rule out other problems, such as cancer, ulcers and stones. Biopsies can also be performed during this procedure.

03 | Treatment

In most cases of Interstitial Cystitis, a combination of treatments will be recommended for symptom relief.

The following is a summary of the most common forms of treatment:

- **Physical Therapy** – to relieve pain associated with muscle tenderness, restrictive connective tissue and/or muscle abnormalities of the pelvic floor.
- **Oral Medications** – NSAIDs, Tricyclic Antidepressants, Antihistamines and other medications can all provide different forms of relief.
- **Nerve Stimulation** – TENS or sacral nerve stimulation can relieve pelvic pain and sometimes reduce urinary frequency.
- **Bladder Instillation** – Dimethyl Sulfoxide can be inserted into the bladder along with other medications to provide symptom relief.

05 | Lifestyle Change

Healthy eating and staying hydrated are important to your overall well-being, including bladder health. You may find that some foods trigger your IC symptoms, and avoiding these can bring relief. Keeping a food diary, staying active and avoiding stress are all vital steps in feeling your best with Interstitial Cystitis.

To learn more Interstitial Cystitis, please visit:

<https://www.urologyhealth.org/>

Did You Know?

There are over 200,000 new cases each year

References

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/interstitial-cystitis/home/ovc-20251830>

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/urologic-diseases/interstitial-cystitis-painful-bladder-syndrome>