

# INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS

## Patient Fact Sheet

### Introduction

You have been told by your healthcare provider that you have a chronic condition known as interstitial cystitis or “IC.” The symptom that usually is the best clue to interstitial cystitis is a persistent urge to empty the bladder more than the average of 8 times in a day. Many people with interstitial cystitis go to the bathroom more than 15 times per day, and many as often as 20 to 50 times in a 24-hour period. Although cystitis refers to an inflammation in the bladder, interstitial cystitis is not caused by bacteria so isn’t helped by taking antibiotics. This condition occurs more often in women than in men, but when men do have this condition it is often really a chronic prostatitis not caused by bacteria. In women, it most often occurs for the first time between the ages of 20 and 40, with even younger women being seen more frequently than ever before. It is now being seen more often in teenagers and children. There is nothing at the present that can be used to cure this condition, but there are many things which can be done to control the symptoms.

### The symptoms that you might notice include

- The feeling that the bladder needs to be emptied soon, even after just voiding
- Emptying the bladder as often as every 10-20 minutes
- Waking up more than 2 times per night with a strong need to empty the bladder
- Dull to sharp to burning sensations/discomfort/pain over the bladder and into the genitalia (private area of the body)
- All of these symptoms may be worse following eating spicy, acidic foods, some wines and caffeine
- In women, symptoms may be worse following sex

### Signs that your healthcare provider may find on examination

- Blood in the urine seen through a microscope
- Small areas of bleeding in the wall of the bladder or ulcers in the bladder wall which could be seen when looking at the bladder through a scope
- Small bladder, which would be seen by measuring the amount of water the bladder can hold during a Cystometrogram, or a test called bladder hydrodistention. The small bladder may only hold 350 cc’s while a normal adult bladder holds about 500-700 cc’s.
- That pressing the area over the bladder causes mild to moderate pain

### Treatment

There is no known cure for Interstitial Cystitis yet, but treatment to manage the symptoms include:

- There are medications available to decrease the symptoms.
- Biofeedback-assisted pelvic muscle exercise training with a goal of doing this every day
- Sticking very closely to the IC diet recommendations which includes staying away from all acidic foods or caffeine

### Prevention

At the present time, there is no known prevention, as the cause isn’t known. Drinking plenty of fluids may help.

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**For more information, contact:**

**Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates**

East Holly Avenue Box 56

Pitman, NJ 08071-0056

Phone 888-TAP-SUNA or 856-256-2335

[suna@ajj.com](mailto:suna@ajj.com)

[www.suna.org](http://www.suna.org)