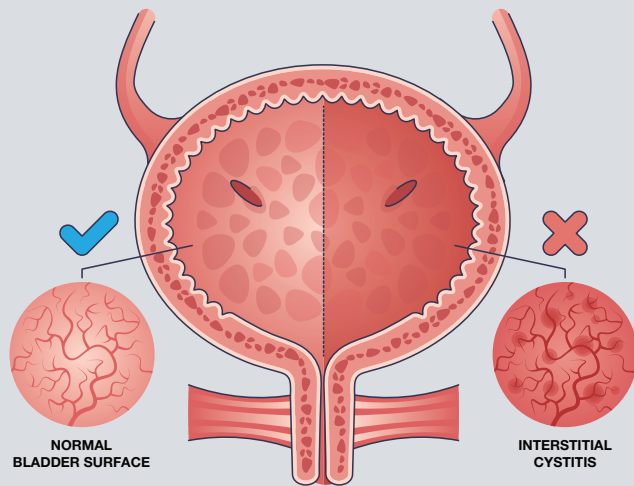


WHAT IS INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS (IC)?

Interstitial cystitis (IC), also known as painful bladder syndrome, is a chronic inflammatory condition of the bladder lining that causes pain and pressure in the pelvic area. The condition, which is more common in adult women, can cause the feeling of needing to empty the bladder often. Some individuals also experience painful urination even though bladder infection is not the cause. IC can interfere with a person's normal daily activities because of the need to stay close to a bathroom and a constant feeling of discomfort.



Interstitial Cystitis (IC)

UNDERSTANDING PAINFUL BLADDER SYNDROME



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WHAT CAUSES IC?

While there is no exact cause of interstitial cystitis, IC patients may have other health conditions that contribute to this bladder condition such as fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, and pelvic floor dysfunction, among others.

Other possible causes of IC may include:

- Defects in the bladder wall that lead to irritation
- A specific type of cell that releases histamine and other chemicals which cause symptoms
- Something in the urine that damages the bladder
- Changes in the nerves that carry bladder sensations making normal events like bladder filling painful
- The body's immune system attacks the bladder

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF IC?

Symptoms of IC may range from mild and tolerable to more intense and can include:

- Pain in the bladder and pelvic region surrounding the bladder. Pain may range from mild to severe.
- An urgent and frequent need to empty the bladder, even if the bladder is not full.
- In women, pain that worsens during menstruation.
- Pain during sexual intercourse.

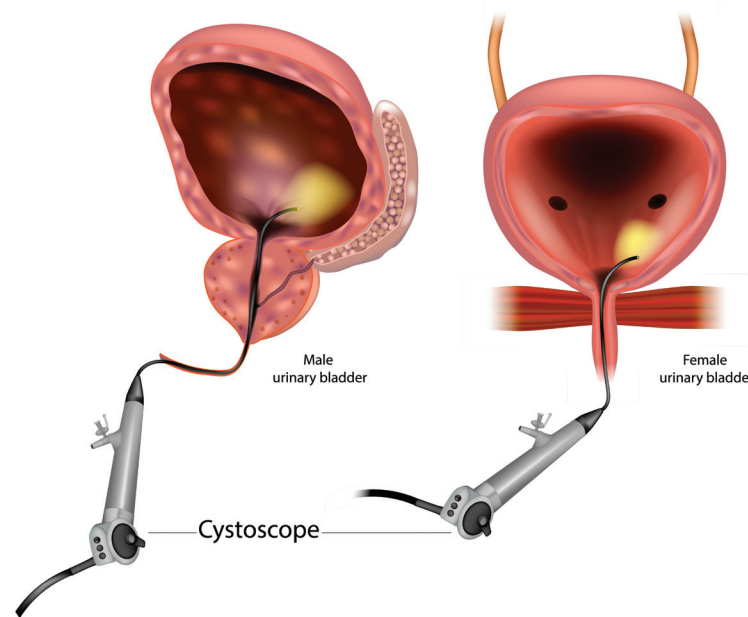
According to the National Institutes of Health, IC may affect between 3 and 8 million women and between 1 and 4 million men in the United States.

HOW IS IC DIAGNOSED?

A diagnosis of IC is often one of exclusion. Typically, your provider will test for other medical conditions that have similar symptoms to IC and rule out other medical issues before coming to a complete diagnosis.

Your provider will perform a comprehensive physical exam and may order additional testing including:

- Urine analysis and urine culture
- A bladder biopsy, where your physician extracts a small bladder tissue sample for examination under a microscope to look for abnormal changes or cells
- Cystoscopy with bladder distention. This minor procedure entails the use of a small instrument called a cystoscope to view the inside of your bladder. During this procedure, your doctor may fill the bladder with a liquid or gas to distend it to provide a clearer view of the bladder walls and to look for any abnormalities or changes.



WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR IC?

While there is no cure for IC, treatments can provide relief from painful symptoms. Your provider may offer several different therapies in combination with one another that have been shown to alleviate and/or diminish many of the symptoms of IC including:

- Pelvic floor physical therapy is often the go-to therapy for individuals suffering from IC. Physical therapy is an effective treatment for underlying pelvic floor dysfunction and has been shown to improve painful symptoms associated with IC.
- Dietary changes include the elimination of bladder irritants such as spicy foods and caffeine.
- Bladder instillation is a minor procedure where your doctor inserts a catheter into the bladder to instill medication into the bladder for pain relief. The solution may also relieve inflammation in the bladder.
- Implantable neuromodulation therapy devices send mild electrical impulses to the nerves in and around the bladder to stimulate blood flow and produce chemicals that block pain. The impulses may also decrease urinary urgency in some patients.
- Botox injections to the bladder can help control urinary frequency and urgency symptoms.
- Bladder distention is a procedure that stretches the bladder by filling it with liquid or gas for a short period while under general anesthesia. Some patients find short-term relief from distention.
- Oral medications such as Elmiron® have been shown to improve IC symptoms including urinary frequency, urgency, burning, and pain in some patients.
- Surgery is typically reserved for the most severe cases of IC or as a treatment of last resort when an individual has not responded to other treatments for symptom relief. Surgical options may include diverting urine from the bladder or enlarging the bladder.