

Interstitial Cystitis (IC)

Interstitial cystitis, also known as bladder pain syndrome, is a chronic inflammatory condition of the muscular and inner layers of the bladder. In severe cases it can cause ulceration and bleeding of the bladder lining and can lead to scarring and stiffening of the bladder. It is often associated with pelvic floor dysfunction. Sometimes it is associated with other chronic pain conditions.

Symptoms While it is not a bladder infection, its symptoms can feel like one. The most common symptoms are pelvic pain, pain with urination, the feeling of needing to urinate often or that the bladder is never empty, painful sexual intercourse, and waking up from sleep to urinate.

Main causes of IC The exact cause of interstitial cystitis is currently unknown. Some patients can recall an injury or infection in their past when the symptoms began. Most patients, though, cannot remember a triggering event. At this time, it is felt that IC is a combination of an injury to the bladder lining, spasm in the pelvic floor muscles, and a higher level of pain feeling in the patient.

Treatment

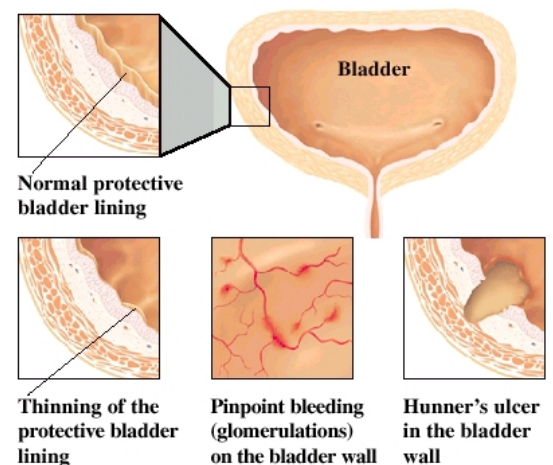
Diet and Lifestyle Changes like avoiding foods and beverages that cause bladder irritation.

Medications of many types are used to target each cause of pain. Some medications treat the bladder lining. Some treat how the brain processes pain. Others treat inflammation. Patients often require multiple medications to treat IC.

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy is used to relieve pelvic floor muscle spasms.

Bladder Instillations are done in the doctor's office. A treatment fluid is placed in the bladder and left for a few minutes to treat the bladder lining directly.

Cystoscopy with Hydrodistention is typically done in the operating room with the patient asleep. The bladder is filled until it is very full, thus stretching the bladder. A small camera is then placed in the bladder to look directly at the lining. This procedure both helps treat and diagnose IC.



For more information on Interstitial Cystitis visit:

www.pelvicpain.org

www.urologyhealth.org

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus