

THE INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS ASSOCIATION

What is Interstitial Cystitis (IC)?

IC is a chronic condition that consists of recurring pelvic pain, pressure, or discomfort in the bladder and pelvic region associated with urinary frequency (needing to go often) and urgency (feeling a strong need to go). It can also be referred to as painful bladder syndrome (PBS) or IC/PBS. IC can be a debilitating condition and many IC patients are forced to quit their jobs or make other drastic life changes as a result of their symptoms.

Who is affected?

IC can affect anyone. Women, men, and children of any age or race can develop IC, but it is most commonly found in women. IC affects:

- 3 to 8 million (3-6%) US women
- 1.5 million US men*

What causes IC?

The exact cause of IC remains a mystery, but researchers have identified a number of different factors that may contribute to the development of the disease. Many researchers believe a trigger (caused by one more events) may initially damage the bladder or bladder lining, and ultimately lead to the development of IC. More research must be completed in order to definitively determine the cause of IC.

IC Diagnosis and Treatment

There is currently no diagnostic test for IC. Rather physicians perform a series of tests to rule out the presence of any other condition, which then leaves them with the diagnosis of IC. Treatments are often another succession of “trial and error” in which patients and physicians attempt to identify successful treatment therapies and techniques. Defining a sequence of evidence-based treatment guidelines will be a huge step forward for the IC community and will help to de-mystify this oft misunderstood condition.

The Future of IC

The future of IC diagnosis, treatments, and patient outcomes hinges on the continuation and expansion of IC research. Researchers have made progress in recent years, thanks in no small part to NIH support, towards discovering a diagnostic tool for IC, but nothing has yet been approved for use in the US. Researchers continue to work towards the ultimate goal of discovering a cure for IC; however, this goal will not be reached without the continued support of the NIH and the Obama administration. Optimal care for people with IC also requires increased awareness about the condition among healthcare providers, patients and the public. The ICA works in partnership with the CDC to raise awareness about IC.

About the Interstitial Cystitis Association (ICA)

Founded in 1984, the ICA remains the only non-profit organization dedicated to providing advocacy, research funding, and education to ensure early diagnosis and optimal care with dignity for people affected by IC. For more information, visit www.ichelp.org. Together we will Conquer IC and Change Lives.

*This number is a probably a low estimate because IC in men may often be mistaken for another disorder, such as chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome.

Putting the pieces together

Website: www.ichelp.org • Toll-Free: 800-HELP-ICA (800-435-7422)

