

Interstitial Cystitis (Painful Bladder Syndrome)

Statistics now show that in the USA alone, 3.2 – 7.9 million women and 1 – 4 men are dealing with IC.

IC can interfere so much with life that those dealing with it may miss work, lose sleep, have panic attacks, deal with depression, suicidal thoughts and have an overall poor quality of life.

In Europe IC is only the diagnosis for those with Hunner's lesions. All others are diagnosed as having PBS. In Japan it is called Hypersensitive Bladder Syndrome (HBS). This means that it can be confusing. It also underlines the importance to use the diagnosis that your client connects to in your communication.

Up until the last decade, IC was considered a "bladder disease", but now thanks to research and work by clinicians we understand now that this extends beyond the bladder (for example -- it may involve pelvic floor muscles and nerves).

It has been proven that the removal of the bladder isn't an effective way to reduce the pain.

25 out of 31 women (Finnish study) experienced pain symptoms of IC when the pelvic floor was palpated.

IC or PBS is a complex pain condition that involves symptoms of:

- Urinary frequency and/or urgency
- Pressure, pain or discomfort – similar to how a UTI would feel, but without infection present
- Increase in symptoms may be present during times of increased stress
- Tight muscles or nerve trauma may be present

Out of those diagnosed with IC or PBS – 5-10% have lesions on the bladder wall (Hunner's Lesions) and the other 90-95% have a "normal" bladder, but still have bladder / pelvic pain.

Subtypes of IC (created by Dr. Christopher Payne in 2015)

1. Hunner's Lesions – 5-10% - lesions on bladder wall – severe inflammation, bleeding, damaged bladder wall. – in 2015 linked to a rare viral infection

2. Bladder Wall Injury – symptoms start after a UTI, chemotherapy, bad diet or chemical exposure

3. Pelvic Floor Injury – trauma to pelvic floor (examples: birth, falling, repetitive bicycling, sexual abuse)

4. Pudendal Neuralgia – muscles are hypertonic (bike riders syndrome) – may notice a painful arousal sensation

5. Multiple Pain Disorders / Functional Somatic Syndrome – other things present (such as IBS, vulvodynia, prostatodynia, fibromyalgia, neurosensitivity, migraines and Raynaud's syndrome) – nerves are very sensitive – some cases genetic, others due to injury or trauma

What May Relieve IC Symptoms?

- Trigger point release (pelvic floor physiotherapist)
- Massage to connective tissue (abdomen & legs)
- Stretching / Yoga - Restorative, Gentle, Yin
- Meditation and other stress management techniques
- Avoid constipation
- Epsom salts baths - relieve tight muscles, time for body scan and increases magnesium
- Magnesium spray (if not enough time for Epsom salt bath)
- Castor oil packs – for scar tissue and overactive bladder
- Probiotic
- Functional medicine / naturopathic doctor – auto-immune diet
- Minimum of 6 hours of sleep – ideally between 10pm – 4am
- NO KEGELS - Instead do reverse kegels
- Keep urine dilute, but don't over-hydrate
- Exclude certain trigger foods
(caffeinated beverages, soda, alcohol, citrus fruits and juices, artificial sweeteners, spicy foods, tomatoes and food additives and preservatives)