

## Bladder Pain Treatment Plan

Bladder pain can be caused by many factors. A frequent cause is **damage to the bladder lining** due to infection. This can cause prolonged bladder pain in some women. This can be highly frustrating because it feels like the infection is still there, but urine tests show that it is gone. In other cases there is no history of bladder infection at all and the cause is unknown. This condition is also known as **Interstitial cystitis (“IC.”)**

Bladder pain can be made worse by many factors including:

- stress
- diet
- sex

Dr Byers has been treating this condition for nearly 2 decades and has found the following plan to be highly effective in reducing symptoms and promoting bladder healing:

- Drinking a lot of **water** to keep urine dilute
- Taking a low dose **antibiotic** either nightly or after sex, to reduce UTI risk
- Modifying the **diet** to reduce irritants (acidic and spicy foods, alcohol, caffeine and soda)
- Taking **Preliet** (“Tums for your bladder”) with every meal
- Taking **Cysto-Protek** supplements which coat the bladder and reduce inflammation
- Taking **Uribel** (or similar) prescription medication to reduce symptoms

You may be scheduled for an office cystoscopy to evaluate your bladder lining. The bladder usually appears normal but occasionally an ulcer is found and treatment of the ulcer results in rapid symptom improvement. Some bladder cancers can cause bladder pain but this is rare.

If your symptoms are very severe or are not responding to the above plan, we may recommend:

- Antihistamines** - Zyrtec or hydroxyzine - to reduce allergy-related symptoms
- Bladder instillations** of heparin and lidocaine, to coat the bladder and reduce pain
- Elmiron** - a prescription medication that slowly coats the bladder and aids healing
- Hydrodistension under anesthesia** - rarely used but often successful in severe cases

There are many sources for information about bladder pain.

Chronic cases of bladder pain without infection are known as “IC” or interstitial cystitis. Most cases of bladder pain, including those we would consider “IC,” improve with treatment, but it takes time. Generally you can expect improvement to be proportional to the length of time you have had symptoms. For instance if symptoms have gone on 6 months, you can expect improvement in about 3 months. “Flares,” sudden increases in symptoms that feel like UTIs, will become less frequent and less severe.