

Dietary Bladder Irritants

What is a bladder irritant?

A bladder irritant is any food, drink, or medication that causes the bladder to be irritated. Irritation can cause frequency (needing to urinate more often than normal), urgency (the sense of needing to urinate), bladder spasm, and even bladder pain. Bladder spasms can lead to urine leakage if there is a sudden urge, but not enough time to reach a toilet.

What are some examples of bladder irritants?

The following is a list of bladder irritants. The six MOST IRRITATING are listed first:

- *All alcoholic beverages
- *Cigarettes/tobacco
- *Cola drinks
- *Tea
- *Chocolate
- *Coffee

Other possible irritants include:

Fruits (and their juices): cranberries, grapes, oranges, lemons, peaches, pineapple, plums, apples, and cantaloupe

Vegetables: onions, tomatoes, chilies, peppers

Milk/Dairy: aged cheese, sour cream, yogurt

Grains: rye & sourdough breads

Seasonings: spices & spicy food, especially peppers, acidic foods and beverages, walnuts & peanuts, vinegar

How do I change my diet?

You should start by eliminating, or at least cutting down, on the top six irritants: coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, alcohol, and cigarettes. You should allow at least two weeks without the food or drink before noticing any change in your bladder control. The proof that the food or drink is causing irritation is a resumption of frequency and urgency when the food or drink is restarted.

Can I substitute any foods?

Yes, there are substitutes readily available. Suggested substitutes include:

Herbal tea without citrus, weakly brewed tea

Melons (except cantaloupe)

White chocolate

Pine nuts, almonds, or cashews

Acid-free coffee & tea (call 1-800-TEALEAF for more info)

Prelief, dietary supplement to neutralize acidic foods (call 1-800-994-4711 for more info)

Handout adapted from Interstitial Cystitis Association web site, <http://www.ichelp.org>

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS

Food Category	Permitted Foods	Foods to Avoid or Use Cautiously
Fruits	Blueberries, Pears, Melons, (other than cantaloupe)	All other fruits and juices made from them
Vegetables	Potatoes, homegrown tomatoes and vegetables (other than those listed on right)	Fava beans, lima beans, onions, rhubarb, tofu and store bought tomatoes
Milk / Dairy	Milk chocolate, cottage cheese American cheese, milk	Added cheeses, sour cream, eggs, yogurt, chocolate
Carbohydrates	Pasta, rice and breads (other than those listed on right)	Rye and sourdough breads/ Grains
Meats / Fish	Poultry, fish and meats (other than those listed on right)	Aged, canned, cured, processed and smoked meats and fish, anchovies, caviar, chicken livers, corned beef, and meats that contain nitrates and nitrites
Nuts	Almonds, cashews, pine nuts	Most other nuts
Beverages	Bottled or spring water, decaffeinated acid free coffee and tea, some herb	Alcoholic beverages, beer, wine; carbonated drinks, coffee, tea, and cranberry juice
Seasonings	Garlic and seasonings (other than below)	Mayonnaise, miso, spicy foods (especially Chinese, Mexican, Indian and Thai foods)
Preservatives	Avoid Or Use Cautiously	Benzol alcohol, citric acid, monosodium glutamate, aspartame, saccharin, and foods containing preservatives artificial ingredients / colors

For more information please go to: www.ic-network.com, www.ichelp.com,
www.pelvicpain.org, www.urotoday.com, www.painful-bladder.org