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Confident Choices Newsletter



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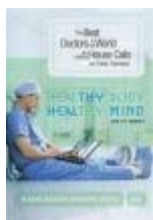
Take Control!

Confident Choices can help you learn how to modify your diet and reduce your IC symptoms.

To purchase:
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NutraConsults
 PO Box 210086
 Auburn Hills, MI 48348



The popular program
"Healthy Body: Healthy Mind"

Happy New Year!

Dear :

One question that comes up frequently is about the various "alkalizing diets" out there that promise to cure everything from acne to cancer. When a person with IC sees that many of the foods that cause them trouble seem to be acidic, it is easy to get drawn into the promise of an easy fix. Unfortunately, the connection between acidic foods and IC is a little more complicated than that; in fact, there is very good reason why doctors are skeptical and often worried about people following

The big thing to remember is that **body pH** and **urine pH** are two entirely different things.

Body pH: Our bodies can only tolerate a tiny variation in pH, and it is critical to maintain that pH. If the body pH gets a bit too high, or a bit too low, we will die. Therefore, as you might imagine, the body has more than one feedback system in place to maintain this delicate balance. For example, if the body becomes too acid, it can actually leach calcium out of the bones to protect the pH, even if that means that the bones become weaker.

Urine pH: One function of the urinary tract system is to help the body maintain this fragile pH level. As we regulate our **body pH**, the urinary tract system gets rid of the extra acid or alkaline which, as you can imagine, bounces our **urine pH** all over the place all day long depending on what we eat, if we are under stress, if we exercise, and even as our hormones cycle. In normal people, this isn't a problem because their bladder lining or GAG layer (not unlike the stomach lining) is heavily protected against such wide swings in pH.

I think you are probably following me by now. Because IC bladders have been injured, have had the GAG layer eaten away by something, or are full of mast cells, they can't tolerate a huge variation in pH. Therefore, as IC patients, we hurt when our body makes urine. Imagine having a cut in the palm of your hand and putting it in lemon juice (acid) or bleach (alkaline)...either way it would hurt like the dickens, right?

Other contradictions with the acid/alkaline theory:

- **Acid in doesn't necessarily mean acid out.** Metabolism of foods is a highly complicated process, one that we really don't know everything about yet. Orange juice, when metabolized is

Mind has produced a video titled "Bladder Disorder, Interstitial Cystitis." Order your copy [here](#).

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alkaline while cranberry juice metabolized to an acid form. Of course both can be trigger foods for IC.

- **Meat, dairy, and eggs are reported to be highly soothing to most IC patients.** In an "alkalizing diet" these foods are often avoided, which can create an even more hostile environment for the bladder. Soy products are also often recommended in an alkalizing diet, yet, soy is quite often a terrible trigger food for people with IC.
- **Other components of our diet are damaging to our bladders.** It isn't just the pH that can hurt an IC bladder. Caffeine and MSG excite the nerves and cause a lot of grief for IC patients. Also, there are allergic components to foods that can increase the mast cells, thus weakening the bladder lining. Some urologists actually refer their patients to an allergist if they present with increased mast cells, and I have heard that when people get treated, they feel much better.
- **Also, as I mentioned, many, many other bodily functions upset the body pH.** In fact, stress is probably a worse trigger for some people than food! I know that if I am exposed to a stressful situation, my bladder is affected almost instantaneously. That is one reason that some people have a hard time getting their IC under control....living with a chronic disease is very stressful....thus setting us up in a cycle of stress and pain, which usually causes more stress, then more pain.
- **Finally, some of the recommendations in an alkaline diet are a recipe for malnutrition.** Our bodies need all the help they can get to heal, and that means getting all of the spare parts from foods that we need for the process of rebuilding our bodies and staying healthy. Eliminating entire classes of foods, eliminates entire classes of essential nutrients—many we haven't even discovered yet! (We really don't know everything that is in our foods.....nutrition is just a baby science compared to biology, chemistry, etc.)

THEREFORE, a good IC diet eliminates all chemical and allergic foods that can damage the bladder, while maintaining as many healthy foods as possible to provide strength to the whole body. In fact, once people get stabilized, they can often eat a wider variety of foods than they were able to. That is a GOOD thing, because it helps protect us from other diseases, strengthens our immune systems, and keeps us HAPPY because we can actually eat a wider variety of foods.

(Many thanks to the folks in the New Jersey Interstitial Cystitis Support Group for this excellent question!)

Research Update: Bacteria that cause urinary tract infections may invade bladder cells

From the press release:

St. Louis, Dec. 17, 2007 — Scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have found definitive proof that some of the bacteria that plague women with urinary tract infections (UTIs) are entrenched inside human bladder cells.

The finding confirms a controversial revision of scientists' model of how bacteria cause UTIs. Previously, most researchers assumed that the bacteria responsible for infections get into the bladder but do not invade the individual cells that line the interior of the bladder.

"Our animal model of UTIs has allowed us to make a number of predictions about human UTIs, but at the end of the day, we felt it was critical to show this in humans, and now we've done just that," says senior author Scott J. Hultgren, Ph.D., the Helen L. Stoeber Professor of Molecular Microbiology at the School of Medicine.

This information may not only help doctors treat UTIs more effectively, but may provide some clues to some interstitial cystitis cases. The results appear in the December issue of Public Library of Science Medicine. For more information visit: http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-12/wuso-btc121707.php

Interstitial Cystitis DVD Now Available on Amazon.com

The popular medical program, *Healthy Body Healthy Mind* has produced a video about interstitial cystitis. This video is a great introduction to IC, and showcases some of the movers and shakers in the world of IC including Jill Osborn of Interstitial Cystitis Network, Vicki Ratner of Interstitial Cystitis Network, Dr. Robert Moldwin, Dr. Lowell Parsons, Dr. Matt Rosenburg, Dr. Floyd Seskin. (They even interviewed me, although my part in the program was quite small.)

Especially poignant were the stories told by several people who graciously opened their homes and shared their perspective on interstitial cystitis.

This video is ideal for new patients, IC veterans and would be great to show at a local IC support group meeting. To purchase visit:

[Bladder Disorder Interstitial Cystitis by Healthy Body, Healthy Mind](#)

Do you have a question for me? Please send your questions to NutraConsults@aol.com, and I will try to answer as many as possible in future issues of the *Confident Choices Newsletter*.

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