

## Understanding the Interstitial Cystitis/Painful Bladder Syndrome Diet

### Determining Your Personal Trigger Foods

Diet modification is the first line of defense for patients struggling with interstitial cystitis or painful bladder syndrome (IC/PBS). Since sensitivity to various foods can vary among individuals, it is important to determine your personal trigger foods. This three-column system is based on emerging research as well as information gathered from patient and clinician experience.

### Step by Step Through the Food Categories

**Bladder Friendly** includes foods that rarely bother even the most sensitive IC bladders. If you are newly diagnosed, eat these foods until you experience some relief from your symptoms. It may take a few weeks, but do your best to stick with it!

**Try It** includes foods that are generally safe to eat though they might bother more sensitive bladders. If your bladder is improving, these foods are safe to try. Test one food at a time, beginning with a small quantity such as 1/2 a piece of fruit or a dash of spice, gradually increasing portion size over the course of a few days. If you do not react to the food, you can add it to your own personal "Bladder Friendly" list. If your symptoms flare after consuming a problem food, return to the foods you know to be ok for your bladder until the flare passes.

**Caution** includes foods which trigger bladder discomfort. Try these foods only if your bladder is no longer sensitive.

### Additional Hints

1. **Keep a good food and symptoms diary** while you are experimenting with your diet. It can take from minutes to hours for a problem food or beverage to trigger symptoms.
2. **Avoid trigger foods when starting new therapies, such as Elmiron®.** Problem foods may compromise the effectiveness of those treatments.

3. **Don't be afraid to eat.** In addition to the many foods that you can enjoy from the "Bladder Friendly" list, as your symptoms improve, add variety to your diet by testing foods from the "Try It" list. Some bladder patients, occasionally, may be able to consume small quantities foods from the "Caution" list.
4. **Shop for fresh foods whenever possible.** Processed foods often contain ingredients that can be irritating including some preservatives, artificial flavorings, additives and or artificial vitamins. Organic foods often contain fewer additives and may be useful in an IC diet. Always read labels to look for hidden triggers.
5. **Try different brands.** Many "brands" of the same food have completely different ingredients and additives and could irritate the bladder.
6. **Avoid foods that you know you are allergic to even if they are included in this diet guide.** Pre-existing food allergies, such as an allergy to nuts or grains, can also trigger bladder irritation and/or a stronger allergic reaction.

#### *Developed in partnership with:*

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*[Confident Choices: Customizing the IC Diet](#)*

*[Confident Choices: A Cookbook for IC and OAB](#)*

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*[A Taste of the Good Life: A Cookbook for an IC Diet](#)*

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## IC/PBS Food List

	Bladder Friendly	Try It	Caution
<b>Note: Foods labeled with a plus sign (+) can be especially soothing during an IC flare.</b>			
 <p><b>Beverages</b></p>	<p>water – <i>test to find one that works for you</i>                      juice – <i>blueberry, pear</i>                      milk<sup>+</sup>                      milk substitutes – <i>almond<sup>+</sup>, rice, Lactaid<sup>+</sup></i>                      milkshake – <i>vanilla<sup>+</sup></i>                      tea – <i>chamomile<sup>+</sup>, peppermint<sup>+</sup></i>                      non-dairy creamers – <i>check label</i>                      eggnog – <i>non alcoholic<sup>+</sup>, without problem ingredients</i></p>	<p>Juice – <i>low-acid orange, grape, some apple, baby</i>                      coffee – <i>herbal, low-acid decaf, roasted carob</i>                      tea – <i>alfalfa, roasted carob</i>                      soda – <i>root beer with ice (decaffeinated, not diet)</i>                      sports drinks – <i>test to find one that works for you (e.g., blue Gatorade)</i></p>	<p>alcohol – <i>not only irritating to the bladder but also contraindicated with many IC medications</i>                      water – <i>carbonated, vitamin, flavored</i>                      juice – <i>cranberry, orange, acai</i>                      milk – <i>chocolate, soy</i>                      coffee – <i>regular &amp; decaf</i>                      teas – <i>regular, green, herbal, iced</i>                      sodas – <i>colas, citrus, orange, diet</i>                      drink powders – <i>such as Kool-aid®, lemonade, orange, or powdered ice tea drinks</i>                      sports drinks                      energy drinks – <i>guarana, mate</i></p>
 <p><b>Grains</b></p>	<p>breads – <i>corn bread<sup>+</sup>, oat bread<sup>+</sup>, pita, potato bread<sup>+</sup>, white bread<sup>+</sup>, Italian sweet bread, whole wheat bread (i.e. Ezekiel)</i>                      cereals – <i>most cereals without problem ingredients, oat cereal, rice cereal (hot or cold)</i>                      crackers – <i>matzo</i>                      grains – <i>couscous, grits, millet, quinoa<sup>+</sup>, spelt</i>                      flours – <i>buckwheat, wheat</i>                      pasta                      rice<sup>+</sup></p>	<p>breads – <i>rye, sourdough</i>                      cereals – <i>instant packaged hot cereal</i>                      crackers – <i>without problem ingredients</i>                      grain – <i>amaranth</i></p>	<p>breads – <i>made with unsafe ingredients and/or heavily processed and fortified</i>                      cereals – <i>heavily preserved, sweetened, heavily fortified, flavored,</i>                      flour – <i>soy</i>                      pasta – <i>prepared or boxed pasta dishes</i>                      rice – <i>boxed dishes</i></p>
 <p><b>Fats and Nuts</b></p>	<p>nuts – <i>almonds, cashews, peanuts</i>                      butters – <i>almond, peanut</i>                      oils – <i>canola, coconut, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soy</i>                      margarine                      lard                      shortening                      salad dressing – <i>homemade without problem ingredients</i></p>	<p>nuts – <i>macadamia, pecans, walnuts</i>                      mayonnaise                      tahini                      seeds – <i>sunflower seeds</i>                      shortening – <i>butter-flavored</i></p>	<p>nuts – <i>filberts, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios</i>                      oils – <i>check label</i>                      salad dressings – <i>most</i></p> <p><b>If you have nut or other food allergies, talk with your healthcare provider about your special diet needs.</b></p>

	Bladder Friendly	Try It	Caution
 <p>Eggs, Meat, Fish and Poultry</p>	<p>eggs<sup>+</sup>                      poultry – chicken<sup>+</sup>, turkey                      fish<sup>+</sup>                      beef<sup>+</sup>                      seafood – clams, crabmeat (not canned), lobster, shrimp                      lamb<sup>+</sup>                      pork                      protein powder – whey, egg whites                      veal                      liver – beef or chicken</p>	<p>garden/veggie burgers – without soy products                      beef – corned beef                      sandwich meats – liverwurst, ham (fresh or boiled, without heavy preservatives or flavorings.)                      bacon                      anchovies                      caviar                      prosciutto                      sausages – without problem ingredients</p>	<p>cured meats – bologna, pepperoni, salami                      canned crab meat                      hot dogs                      sausage – most                      smoked fish                      soy products – soy veggie patties, protein powder, tofu</p>
 <p>Dairy, Cheeses, Frozen Desserts</p>	<p>cheeses – American, mozzarella, cheddar cheese (mild), feta, ricotta<sup>+</sup>, string cheeses<sup>+</sup>                      cream cheese                      cottage cheese<sup>+</sup>                      ice cream<sup>+</sup> – most                      milk<sup>+</sup>                      milk substitutes – Lactaid                      sherbet – no citrus or chocolate flavors                      Rice Dream<sup>®</sup> dessert – vanilla                      whipped cream – Cool Whip</p>	<p>cheeses – blue cheese, brie, brick parmesan, camembert, cheddar cheese (sharp), edam, emmenthaler, gruyere hard jack, Monterey Jack, parmesan (fresh &amp; canned), Roquefort, stilton, Swiss                      buttermilk                      sour cream - accent on a baked potato or soup                      pizza - plain, chicken &amp; garlic, veggie or made with white sauce - no pepperoni                      sorbet                      yogurt - blueberry, vanilla, plain</p>	<p>cheeses – processed, Cheez Whiz                      ice cream – caution with citrus or chocolate flavors                      soy products – soy milk, soy cheeses</p>
 <p>Fruits</p>	<p>apples – Gala, Fuji, Pink Lady                      applesauce – homemade with Gala, Fuji or Pink Lady apples                      blueberries<sup>+</sup>                      coconut – without preservatives                      dates – without preservatives                      pears<sup>+</sup>                      watermelon</p>	<p>applesauce – commercial or baby                      apricots                      bananas                      berries – blackberries, raspberries, olallieberries                      cherimoya                      cherries – fresh, maraschino                      citrus peels                      currants                      figs                      mango                      melon – Crenshaw, honeydew                      peaches                      plums                      raisins – brown                      rhubarb</p>	<p>berries – cranberries, most                      citrus – lemons, limes, oranges, grapefruit                      dried fruit – with preservatives                      grapes                      guava                      kiwi fruit                      melons – cantaloupe                      nectarines                      passion fruit                      papaya                      persimmon                      pineapple                      starfruit                      strawberries                      raisins – golden</p>

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 <p>Vegetables and Dried Beans</p>	<p>asparagus                      avocado                      beans – <i>black eyed peas, garbanzo, lentils, pinto, white, most dried beans</i>                      beets                      broccoli                      brussels sprouts                      cabbage                      carrots<sup>+</sup>                      cauliflower                      celery                      chives                      corn<sup>+</sup>                      cucumber                      eggplant                      green beans                      greens – <i>collard greens, kale, mustard greens, okra, swiss chard, spinach, bok choy</i>                      lettuce &amp; most salad greens                      mushrooms<sup>+</sup>                      olives – <i>black</i>                      parsley<sup>+</sup>                      peas – <i>green<sup>+</sup>, snow peas, split peas</i>                      bell peppers – <i>yellow, orange, red</i>                      potatoes<sup>+</sup> – <i>white, yams</i>                      pumpkin                      radishes                      rhubarb                      rutabaga                      squash<sup>+</sup> – <i>summer, winter, zucchini</i>                      turnips</p>	<p>beans – <i>fava, kidney beans, lima beans, black beans</i>                      bell peppers – <i>green</i>                      olives – <i>green</i>                      greens – <i>chicory, dandelion greens, purslane, turnip greens</i>                      leeks (cooked)                      onions – <i>white, red, cooked bulb onion, raw green</i>                      tomatoes – <i>homegrown, low acid</i>                      watercress</p>	<p>chili peppers                      onions – <i>raw bulb onions</i>                      pickles                      sauerkraut                      soy beans – <i>edamame, roasted</i>                      tomato – <i>tomato sauces, tomato juice</i>                      tofu</p>
 <p>Soups</p>	<p>homemade soup &amp; stock – <i>from okay meats and vegetables</i></p>	<p>soups – <i>canned, low sodium, organic soups (without problem ingredients)</i></p>	<p>bouillon – <i>cubes, powder</i>                      canned – <i>most</i>                      packaged soups – <i>most</i></p>

	<b>Bladder Friendly</b>	<b>Try It</b>	<b>Caution</b>
 <p>Snacks</p>	<p>almonds                      carrots                      celery                      chips (plain) – <i>corn , potato</i>                      crackers – <i>soda or soup</i>                      fruit bars – <i>blueberry, pear</i>                      milkshake – <i>vanilla</i>                      oatmeal bars                      peanuts                      peanut butter                      popcorn                      pretzels – <i>plain</i></p>	<p>donuts – <i>glazed, old fashioned</i>                      graham crackers                      fruit &amp; nut bars – <i>with safe ingredients</i>                      licorice                      pizza – <i>plain, chicken &amp; garlic, veggie or made with white sauce - no pepperoni</i></p>	<p>chips – <i>potato (seasoned, barbequed)</i>                      dessert cakes – <i>fast food restaurants</i></p>
 <p>Desserts and Sweets</p>	<p>berries – <i>blueberries</i>                      cake – <i>homemade pound cake<sup>+</sup>, angel food<sup>+</sup>, homemade white/yellow cakes<sup>+</sup>, carrot</i>                      frostings - <i>homemade vanilla frosting, homemade caramel frosting, carob, whipped cream</i>                      carob                      cookies – <i>oatmeal<sup>+</sup>, shortbread, sugar<sup>+</sup></i>                      muffins – <i>carrot</i>                      cheesecake                      creme brûlée                      custards<sup>+</sup>                      pie – <i>custard, cream pie, homemade apple pie (with safe apples), pumpkin pie</i>                      divinity                      sweet breads – <i>homemade zucchini bread<sup>+</sup></i>                      candy – <i>licorice</i>                      maple syrup                      pastries – <i>plain, almond, pear</i>                      ice cream – <i>peppermint, vanilla<sup>+</sup></i>                      pudding – <i>tapioca, vanilla<sup>+</sup>, rice<sup>+</sup></i>                      milkshake – <i>vanilla<sup>+</sup></i>                      sweeteners – <i>brown sugar, honey<sup>+</sup>, sugar</i></p>	<p>artificial sweeteners – <i>Splenda® (sucralose)</i>                      candy – <i>caramel</i>                      chocolate – <i>white</i>                      ice cream – <i>caramel, coconut, mango, peppermint, butter pecan</i>                      sorbet – <i>coconut</i>                      pastries – <i>blueberry, cinnamon</i>                      popsicles – <i>some</i>                      sweet bread – <i>banana</i>                      yogurt – <i>frozen</i></p>	<p>artificial sweeteners – <i>acesulfame K, aspartame, Nutrasweet®, saccharine, Sweet-N-Low, stevia</i>                      candy – <i>red hot-type cinnamon</i>                      chocolate – <i>cocoa, milk, bittersweet, dark</i>                      ice cream – <i>chocolate, coffee, rocky road</i>                      sorbets – <i>with problem fruits</i>                      pastries – <i>with problem fruits</i>                      pie – <i>pecan, mincemeat</i>                      desserts – <i>with problem nuts</i>                      fruitcakes</p>

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 <p>Condiments, Seasonings, and Flavor Enhancers</p>	allspice almond extract anise basil <sup>+</sup> caraway seed coriander dill fennel garlic <sup>+</sup> mace marjoram <sup>+</sup> oregano <sup>+</sup> poppy seed rosemary <sup>+</sup> sage <sup>+</sup> salt <i>in small quantities</i> thyme tarragon vanilla extract	black pepper celery seed cilantro cinnamon – <i>powdered</i> citric acid – <i>in small quantities</i> cumin (small amt) dried parsley dried chervil ginger lemon extract mayonnaise malt powder nutmeg onion powder orange extract turmeric	ascorbic acid autolyzed yeast BHA and BHT benzoates catsup (ketchup) cayenne cloves chili powder horseradish hot curry powder hydrolyzed protein meat tenderizers miso mustard oleoresin paprika paprika pickles red pepper soy sauce tamari vinegar worcestershire sauce MSG – <i>monosodium glutamate</i> metabisulfites sulfites
 <p>Fiber Supplements</p>	acacia fiber Benefiber <sup>®</sup> Metamucil <sup>®</sup> – <i>plain psyllium</i> bulk psyllium fiber – <i>not sugar free</i>	Colace <sup>®</sup> Metamucil <sup>®</sup> – <i>cinnamon wafers</i>	Metamucil <sup>®</sup> – <i>orange, berry burst</i> psyllium fiber – <i>sugar-free due to the presence of artificial sweeteners</i> senna

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