# Interstitial Cystitis and OAB

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## How Does OAB Relate to Interstitial Cystitis

Are you someone who suffers from overactive bladder (OAB)? If so, you need to know about interstitial cystitis (IC). This condition is where the bladder wall becomes inflamed. It happens because of a defective lining of the bladder. It will present itself like a bladder infection, but antibiotics will not treat it effectively. Interstitial cystitis affects women more than men, where 90% of patients with IC are females. Patients with IC may have symptoms that are similar to overactive bladder.

### Symptoms

The following are symptoms of interstitial cystitis:

- Urgency (accompanied by spasms, pressure, or pain)
- Pain (urethral, vaginal, or abdominal)
- Frequency (all through the day and/or night)

### Diagnosing Interstitial Cystitis

To diagnosis the condition, many things need to be reviewed, including the healthcare professional's review of clinical symptoms. Your medical history, lab tests, and physical exam will be needed to make a diagnosis.

### Treatment for Interstitial Cystitis

Treatment will be individualized as no single approach is effective for every patient. The doctor will determine the best treatment based on his/her findings. However, a patient may go through several approaches to treatment until one is found that alleviates the symptoms of IC. There is currently no cure for this condition.

### Medication

1. **Pentosan polysulfate** is one treatment that is approved by the FDA for IC, and it is taken orally. It is thought to work in the body by building a protective coating on the bladder.
2. **Dimethyl sulfoxide** is another treatment approved by the FDA, but it is administered into the bladder through a catheter. It is done weekly for 6 weeks to reach its therapeutic effectiveness. It helps with pain and inflammation caused by IC.
3. **Hydroxyzine** isn't approved by the FDA to treat IC, but many health providers will try this approach. It is believed that there is too much histamine in the bladder when a patient has IC. Using an antihistamine, like hydroxyzine, can help address that issue and reduce pain sensation from interstitial cystitis.
4. **Amitriptyline** is an antidepressant but may decrease symptoms of IC. It helps to decrease bladder spasms and relieve pain felt by the patient.
5. **Heparin** works similarly to pentosan polysulfate and is administered by catheter into the bladder.

Sometimes it may be given with dimethyl sulfoxide.

**Diet**

Diet modification is the first thing that doctors like you to try when controlling IC symptoms. If you can avoid taking medication, all the better it is for you. There are many foods and beverages that can aggravate interstitial cystitis. The following are common culprits to look for and avoid in your diet:

- Foods and beverages with caffeine
- Alcohol
- Citrus fruits and juices
- Hot peppers
- Chocolate
- Artificial sweeteners

You may want to try eliminating all these foods and see how you feel. If your symptoms subside, you can slowly start adding these foods and beverages back into your diet. When you start to get IC symptoms, you will be able to pinpoint what is causing you trouble.

**Other Therapies You Can Try**

- Acupuncture
- Biofeedback
- Kegel Exercises