



## **Lyme Bladder Pain From Interstitial Cystitis**

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October 2012 - Lyme disease not only has many neurological symptoms, the lyme bladder symptoms are also of great concern to those affected with Lyme disease. Interstitial cystitis is a disease affecting the bladder characterized by a sensation of uncomfortable pressure and pain in the bladder area, and occasionally pain of various intensity in the pelvic area. Abdominal bloating is also present in most cases. There is a persistent, urgent need to urinate, and the individual affected by this condition will tend to go often to the washroom to urinate during the day and night, as often as 60 times in 24 hours. Symptoms will also be much worse if there is a secondary infection of the urinary tract.

This condition is also known as painful bladder syndrome. While it is more commonly found in women, it can also be found in children and men.

A menstrual period, stress, sitting in a chair for long hours and sexual intercourse are well known triggers of the symptoms of interstitial cystitis and this disease is seen more often in patient with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

### **Interstitial Cystitis Explained**

The bladder is a pelvic organ responsible for storing the urine until you're ready to go to the restroom. In healthy adults, the bladder will expand until it is full and then will trigger the message to the brain which will create the urge to urinate.

In interstitial cystitis these signals don't make it properly to the brain and someone affected by this condition will feel the need to urinate frequently and in small amounts. Scientists also believe that there is a defect in the lining of the bladder and this may allow toxic compounds to enter the urine, irritate the bladder wall and create the typical symptoms of interstitial cystitis.

### **Link between Interstitial Cystitis and Lyme Disease**

The association between interstitial cystitis and Lyme disease has not fully understood or researched. Dr. Burdorferf, the microbiologist who discovered *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria

responsible for the development of Lyme disease, indicated in the late 1980's that this germ was found in the bladder of the mice used by him while conducting research studies.

Biopsies taken from different tissue samples, found that this bacteria usually affects many organs including the gallbladder, colon and stomach once an individual is infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Other research studies showed the presence of Lyme bacteria in genital secretions or urine samples in individuals with this infection and overall there is evidence that this bacteria may reside in the bladder.

While standard medicine suggests that the cause of interstitial cystitis is not known and is likely not caused due to a bacterial infection, there is a growing body of evidence associating the bacteria causing Lyme disease with interstitial cystitis. Other bacterial infections such as *Chlamydia* and *Mycoplasma* may also be involved in the development of interstitial cystitis.

Interstitial cystitis is currently treated with anti-inflammatory drugs and sometimes with anti-histaminic and antidepressant medication. Reducing the intake of foods that irritate the bladder like chocolate, carbonated beverages and caffeine may also help, as well as bladder training in which the individual affected by interstitial cystitis will have specific times when they go to bathroom. Other self-care techniques that may be helpful include stress elimination techniques, Kegel exercises, wearing loose clothing and stopping smoking.

References:

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