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Bladder Instillation for Interstitial Cystitis

Pre-Treatment Instructions for Patients

ABOUT YOUR TREATMENT

Interstitial cystitis (also called bladder pain syndrome) causes bladder pain, pressure, urgency, and frequency. The protective lining of the bladder is thought to be damaged, allowing irritants in the urine to reach the bladder wall.

A bladder instillation places medication directly into the bladder through a small catheter. The solution usually contains a combination such as lidocaine, heparin, sodium bicarbonate, and sometimes a steroid or DMSO. It coats and soothes the bladder lining and numbs the bladder wall.

Treatments are typically given **weekly for 6 to 8 weeks**, then spaced out based on your response. Each visit takes about 20 minutes plus the time you hold the solution.

THE DAY OF YOUR TREATMENT

- **Limit fluids for about 2 hours before your appointment** so your bladder is not full — this helps you hold the medication.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and acidic drinks that day; they irritate the bladder.
- Take your regular medications as usual.
- Empty your bladder completely just before the treatment.
- Plan to hold the solution for **30 minutes to an hour**, so allow time or plan to hold it on the way home.

WHAT TO EXPECT

A small soft catheter is placed into the bladder, the bladder is drained, and the medication is instilled slowly. The catheter is then removed. Catheter placement may sting briefly, especially if your bladder is irritated.

You will be asked to hold the solution as long as comfortably possible — ideally 30 to 60 minutes — then urinate normally. The medication does not need to be recovered.

Some people feel relief within hours of the first treatment; for others it takes several treatments. Occasionally symptoms flare briefly after the first instillation before improving.

WHEN TO CALL THE OFFICE

Call 909.236.3333 before your appointment if you have signs of a urinary tract infection — burning, fever, chills, or cloudy foul-smelling urine. Instillations are generally postponed until an infection is treated.