

Our five worst foods

These foods win our vote as the biggest misery makers for people with IC! These are the foods we hear about from IC patients all the time. Of course just because they cause trouble for so many others, that doesn't guarantee they'll make you miserable too. But if you do eat these, watch out! Be sure to pay close attention to how you feel afterwards. If you feel worse, then there is a good chance that this is a trigger food for you. Information is power. Whenever possible, talk with other patients and compare your trigger foods. They may help you discover some hidden triggers in your own diet.

#1: Coffees and Teas

Yes, we know that "lattes" are all the rage these days. Coffee is, regrettably, our number one bladder irritant. In a sensitive bladder, the acid, caffeine and tannins in coffees have little competition for causing intense irritation and discomfort. In our experience, the patients who seem to struggle the most with symptoms are those who still have that one cup of coffee (or tea) in the morning.

Is decaf coffee safe?? For most patients in flares, it isn't. A decaffeinated coffee is still very high in acid and can provoke symptoms. There are a number of herbal coffees, such as Cafix or Pero, that patients have reported to enjoy. There are also low acid coffees, such as Eurromild & Puroast, that may be more tolerable. If you're struggling with IC symptoms and/or a flare, the safest hot drink is hot water and honey!

Teas can be surprisingly irritating to the bladder. A regular tea, such as Earl Grey, is usually out of the question. Remember, just as with coffees, decaf regular teas can still provoke symptoms. Herbal teas, particularly herbal blends, are also notorious for triggering symptoms due to the acidity added from other herbs, such as rosehips. Despite the hype, green tea is so acidic that it can create agonizing pain for some. If you're a tea lover, we suggest that you try a plain organic or mint tea!

You can find a wide variety of low acid, IC Friendly coffees, herbal coffees & teas in the ICN Shop!

#2: Cranberry & Other Fruit Juices

Otherwise known as the ACID BOMB when it hits, cranberry juice may be the biggest bladder irritant in an IC patient's diet. It's often recommended for consumption during urinary tract infections because it is believed to have substances in it that help keep bacteria from sticking to the bladder wall. (If they can't stick, they can't infect. They just get flushed out). But cranberry juice can VERY be difficult for an IC bladder to tolerate. Citrus juices such as orange juice, grapefruit juice, lemonade, will also be very irritating to the bladder. If you're desperate for a juice, we recommend trying a Baby Pear or Apple Juice. Baby juices do not use as much citric acid and seem to be much more bladder friendly!

#3: Carbonated beverages

If we had \$1 for everytime a patient reported that they had a flare from drinking a diet cola, we'd be rich today! Whether it be plain carbonated Perrier water or flavored sodas, IC patients often complain about their irritating effects on the bladder. The biggest problem appears to be the acid, though most flavored sodas also have big doses of caffeine.

The most difficult carbonated beverage for an IC bladder to tolerate appears to be diet cola. Diet colas are a quadruple whammy of acidic carbonation, citric and other acids, caffeine, and artificial sweeteners-- four well-known bladder irritants. Taken all at once it can be an IC bladder's nightmare! If you must have a soda, try a non-diet, usually non-caffeinated, root beer-- and load the cup with plenty of ice to dilute it!

#4: Tomato Products

They're found in so many foods these days, tomatoes and tomato products are darn hard to avoid. Though we think of them as mild mannered vegetables, those tempting red globes are really a very acidic fruit. A few IC patients can tolerate tomato sauces on pizzas and pasta, but most cannot. Low acid tomatoes may be good substitutes for some people. The book *A Taste of the Good Life: A Cookbook for an Interstitial Cystitis Diet*, has a lengthy list of lower-acid tomato varieties you can grow at home!

#5: Multivitamins

Multivitamins are notoriously irritating to the IC bladder due to both the Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid) and Vitamin B6. Unless you require multivitamins for another medical condition, we suggest that stop any multivitamins to determine if they are irritating your bladder.

#6: Tobacco

Ok, we admit it, we cheated to get this one on the list... tobacco isn't really a food. But it does have some significant effects on an IC bladder. For one, it acts to constrict the bladder's blood vessels, interfering with the body's natural way of washing out inflammatory substances from the bladder tissues. Veteran IC patients prefer less pain rather than more. Is that cigarette worth a night and day of pain?

	USUALLY OK	MAY BE OK	USUALLY PROBLEMATIC
Beverages	chamomile herb tea, Evian® water, pear juice pure, blueberry juice, milk, peppermint tea	alfalfa tea, bottled water, herbal coffee, lowacid decaf coffee, low acid baby juices, gin rice milk, root beer w/ ice, rum, tap water, vodka	Beer,carbonatedH2O, chocolate milk, citrus juices, cranberry juice, herb tea blends, green teas, most fruit juices, regular coffee, sodas, soy milk, tea, wines
Grain Products	Buckwheat, corn bread, couscous, matzo, millet, oat bread, oatmeal, pasta, pitas, potato bread, quinoa, rice, spelt white bread	Amaranth, grits, rye bread, sourdough bread, some graham crackers w/o problem ingredients, whole wheat bread	bread or cereal w/preservatives, soy flour
Fats and Nuts	Butter, canola oil, coconut w/o preservatives, coconut oil, corn oil, margarine, olive oil, peanut oil, safflower oil, sesame oil, shortening, soy oil	Almonds, almond butter, cashews, tahini, sunflower seeds	Filberts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, mayonnaise. most salad dressings, peanuts, pecans pistachio nuts, English and black walnuts
Soups	homemade soups from ok meats and vegetables	Health Valley® chicken broth. Some canned soups w/o problem ingredients	bouillion cubes, bouillion powder, most packaged and can-ned soups
Meat, Fish and Poultry	Beef, chicken, eggs, fish, lamb, liver (beef or chicken), pork, shellfish, shrimp, turkey, veal	Anchovies, bacon, Canadian bacon, caviar, corned beef, liverwurst, prosciutto, some sausages, w/o problem ingredients	Bologna, ham, hot dogs. most sausage, pepperoni, salami, smoked fish
Cheeses and Other Dairy	cream cheese, cottage cheese, feta, mozzarella, ricotta, string cheeses, whipped cream, vanilla ice cream	Buttermilk, canned Parmesan, Cool Whip®, Monterey jack, some sherbets, some frozen yogurt, Rice Dream®	aged cheeses, blue cheese, brie, brick parmesan, camembert, cheddar, edam, emmenthaler, gruyere, hard jack, Roquefort, sorbet, soy milk, soy cheese, sour cream, stilton swiss, yogurt
Vegetables and Dried Beans	Broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chives, collard greens, corn, cucumber, kale, lentils, lettuce, mustard greens, mushrooms, most dried beans, okra, parsley, peas, potatoes, pumpkin, radishes, snow peas, split peas, summer squash, turnips, winter squash, yams, zucchini	Avocado, beets, chicory, cooked bulb onions, cooked leeks, dandelion greens, eggplant, low acid tomatoes, purslane, raw green onions, rhubarb, rutabagas, swiss chard, spinach, turnip greens, watercress	chili peppers, black beans, fava beans, lima beans, pickles, raw bulb onions, sauerkraut, soy beans, (edamame), tomato, tomato sauces, tomato juice, tofu
Fruits	dates w/o preservatives, coconut w/o preservatives, pears, pear bars, pear blueberry bars	Bananas, blueberries, brown raisins, cherimoya, citrus peels, crenshaw melon, dried currants, Gala apples, honeydew, mango (small amt), maraschino cherries, rhubarb, watermelon, cinnamon pear jelly, cinnamon pear maple syrup, blueberry preserves	Apricots, all citrus fruit, cantaloupe, cherries, dried fruit w/preservatives, peaches, most plums, most dried figs, golden raisins, grapes, guava, kiwi fruit, most berries, passion fruit, papaya, persimmon, pineapple, starfruit
Desserts and Sweets	brown sugar, carob, carrot muffins or cake, creme brulee, custards, divinity, homemade pound cake, homemade white/yellow cakes, homemade vanilla frosting, homemade caramel frosting, honey, licorice, maple syrup, pear pastries, sugar, sugar cookies, tapioca, vanilla ice cream, vanilla pudding, Dr. Oetkers Products-Vanilla Cake Mix, Vanilla Frosting Mix, Corn Muffins, Carrot Muffins, Apple Muffins, Bisquick Mix and Vanilla Pudding	banana bread, blueberry pastries, caramel candies, peppermint ice cream, plain pastries w/ almonds, plain cheesecakes, some frozen yogurt, some hard candies w/o acids, some popsicles, Splenda® (sucralose), stevia, white chocolate	acesulfame K, aspartame, catsup, chocolate, coffee ice cream, desserts w/ problem nuts, mustard, pastries w/ problem fruits, pecan pie, sorbets, store-bought fruitcakes, mincemeat pie, Nutrasweet®, saccharine
Seasonings and Additives	Allspice, almond extract, anise, basil, caraway seed, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, mace, marjoram, oregano, poppy seed, rosemary, sage, salt, thyme, tarragon, vanilla extract	black pepper, celery seed, cilantro, cinnamon, cumin (small amt), dried parsley, dried chervil, ginger, lemon extract, malt powder, nutmeg, onion powder, orange extract, turmeric	ascorbic acid, autolyzed yeast, BHA and BHT, benzoates, caffeine, cayenne, cloves, chili powder, citric acid, hot curry powder, hydrolyzed protein, meat tenderizers, miso, oleoresin paprika, paprika, red pepper, soy sauce, tamari, vinegar, worcestershire sauce, MSG (monosodium glutamate), metabisulfites sulfites