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Interstitial Cystitis Irritants and Triggers

Different people have different triggers/irritants, but here are the most common you may wish to experiment with avoiding:

- **Food:** Excessive amounts of high sugar foods, alcohol, spices, vinegar, caffeine, coffee, chocolate, sodium benzoate (a histamine release trigger), milk products, very acid foods (e.g. tomatoes, cranberry drinks), Nutrasweet. An exclusion diet will define your unique list of food irritants and triggers. **Wheat** (a lectin that can make mast cells more leaky and more prone to trigger) seems to be a specific trigger for many individuals, even those who test negative for celiac disease (sprue). The issue of diet is a huge one for some men, who swear that by modifying their diets they were able to calm or eliminate the pain in their groins. These men tend to be "atopic", reacting to some foods with diarrhoea, stomach pain, phlegmy or "tight" throats, headaches, rashes, excessive sweating, depression and fatigue.
- **Sexual Activity:** too much sex, too little sex. Find the right frequency for you.
- **Sitting** or pressure on the perineum. Pressure may trigger mast cells.
- **Psychological:** Stress in mice and cats triggers their bladder mast cells. Most likely this occurs in humans and other mammals too.
- **Exercise:** strenuous exercise can provoke flares for some by triggering mast cells.
- **Medications:** avoid those which can cause urinary retention. Be careful of decongestants and antihistamines such as Sudafed, Tavist-D, Contact, Afrin etc. Some people report problems with SSRI antidepressants (Prozac, Zoloft, Celexa, Paxil etc). Some men say their condition was caused by thermogenics (Xenadrine, Hydroxycut). Several men have reported their condition being triggered by androstenedione, a direct hormone precursor of testosterone, which is used (abused?) to build muscles in bodybuilding.