



The Association of Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgeons

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R. Wayne Whitted MD, MPH

Paul A. Pietro MD

8740 N Kendall Dr. Suite 101

Miami, Florida 33176

Phone: 305-596-3744

www.floridaamigos.com

CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT OF IRRITATIVE BLADDER SYMPTOMS

The purpose of this handout is to provide information that can help you discover what you are ingesting or doing that may be contributing to your recurrent irritative bladder symptoms and what steps you can take to relieve your discomfort.

Frequency, urgency, and pain during urination are symptoms of inflammation or irritation. Bacterial infections or substances in the urine causing irritation to the lining of the bladder or urethra can cause these symptoms. Antibiotics can treat bacterial infections. But irritation of the bladder or urethra can result from other causes that will probably not respond to antibiotics.

WHAT TO DO AT THE FIRST SIGN OF BLADDER OR URETHRAL DISCOMFORT

1. The basic treatment for irritable bladder symptoms, whether induced by bacterial or nonbacterial irritants, is hydration. At the first sign of discomfort, start hydration by drinking 16 oz of water mixed with 1 teaspoon of baking soda. Then drink 8 ozs of plain water every 20 minutes for the next 2 hours.
2. Repeat drinking 16 ozs of water with baking soda in 3-4 hours (baking soda contains sodium and can cause fluid retention. If you have a history of high blood pressure, do not use more than twice-in 24 hours).
3. You can take acetaminophen to relieve the pain (2 extra-strength or three regular strength tablets). Bladder analgesics such as phenazopyridine (Pyridium) or Azo-standard may help and will not alter the results of a urine culture should the symptoms not be significantly relieved by diluting the urine and flushing out the bladder.
4. A warm bath to help muscles of the pelvis relax will also help lessen discomfort.
5. **Avoid dietary irritants to the urinary tract.** Certain foods can contribute to urinary frequency, urgency, and discomfort. If symptoms are related to dietary factors, strict adherence to a diet that eliminates the food should bring significant relief in 10 days. Once you are feeling better, you can begin adding foods back in your diet only one food type at a time.
 - a. **All caffeinated drinks**
 - b. **All carbonated beverages,**
 - c. **All citrus fruit**
 - d. **Chocolate**
 - e. **Cranberries and cranberry juice**
 - f. **All spicy foods**
 - g. **Alcoholic beverages**
 - h. **Miscellaneous: apples and apple juice, cantaloupe, grapes, guava, peaches, pineapple, plums, strawberries, sugar, tomatoes, vinegar, vitamin B complex, artificial sweeteners**

Substitute low-acid fruit such as: apricots, papaya, pears, and watermelon. Coffee drinkers can drink Kava or Postum, as well as, other low-acid instant drinks. Tea drinkers can substitute non-citrus herbal and sun-brewed teas.