

The Center for Men’s and Women’s Urology

Bladder Irritants

Some foods, drinks, and medications have been associated with aggravation of many bladder symptoms, including: urgency, frequency, bladder pain, and incontinence. It is worth a trial of eliminating these items to see if they impact the severity of your symptoms. It is recommended to eliminate a food for at least 4 weeks to note if symptoms improve. We recommend reintroducing these items back into the diet one at a time after a period of elimination, allowing 3-5 days between. If symptoms return, this will help you identify the irritant.

Most people do not react poorly to all of these foods. The goal is to find out what triggers YOU.

There are multiple levels of irritant types, ranging from superficial irritants that cause symptoms on direct contact with bladder tissue, to foods that lead to inflammation and compromise the integrity of the bladder lining.

We recommend starting at Level 1 and progressing as needed. Chronic inflammatory conditions like Interstitial Cystitis may require progression to other levels more commonly than those conditions less related to inflammation, like incontinence.

When possible, choose organic, non-GMO foods. Avoid sugar and processed foods with preservatives.

Level 1: Most common bladder irritants

Alcohol	Chocolate	Carbonated beverages
Tea (black)	Citrus	Cigarettes/tobacco
Artificial sweeteners	Coffee (including decaf)	Tomato products

Level 2: Other possible irritants

Apples, apple juice	Pineapple	Cantaloupe
Plums	Chilis/spicy foods	Strawberries
Cranberries/cranberry juice	Grapes	B vitamins
Milk products (milk, cheese yogurt, etc)	Vinegar	Vitamin C
Peaches		

Level 3: Common Inflammatory Foods

*Levels 3&4 can be especially beneficial for those with autoimmune or chronic inflammatory conditions

Gluten (wheat, barley, rye, spelt, oats unless specified GF)	Soy (soybeans, tofu, miso)	
Corn	Eggs	Dairy (as mentioned above)
Nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, paprika, mustard seeds, chilis and their spices)		

Level 4: Autoimmune Paleo

Grains (corn, rice, wheat, millet, buckwheat, sorghum, amaranth, rye, spelt, teff, kamut, oats, etc.)	
Seeds (flax, chia, pumpkin, sunflower, sesame, cumin, coriander)	Dairy
Legumes: beans, soy, peanuts (snap peas, string beans, green beans ok)	Vegetable oils
Nuts (including nut oils like walnut and sesame seed)	All processed foods
Culinary herbs from seeds (mustard, cumin, coriander, fennel, cardamom, fenugreek, caraway, nutmeg, dill seed)	
Gums (guar gum, carrageenan)	
*Continue to avoid from above: eggs, chocolate, alcohol, nightshades, artificial sweeteners)	

Level 5: Low Histamine (Much overlap with levels 1 & 2)

Avocado	Strawberry	Spinach
Fermented foods (including milk products, sauerkraut, kombucha, kimchi, etc.)		
Shellfish	Eggs	Citrus fruits
Most berries	Dried fruit	Tomatoes
Processed/cured/smoked meats	Chocolate/cocoa	Vinegar
Spices (cinnamon, chili powder, anise, nutmeg, curry powder, cayenne)		

Substitutions

Food Groups	Avoid	Substitute with
Beverages	Coffee, black tea, carbonated beverages, fruit juice, alcohol	Water, herbal tea (Chamomile, Linden, and Marshmallow root are great options)
Fruits	Apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, cantaloupes, citrus fruits, cranberries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pineapples, plums, pomegranates, rhubarb, strawberries	Melons (other than cantaloupe), blueberries, pears
Vegetables	Tomatoes, especially canned	Fresh/home grown tomatoes, most other vegetables are ok!
Animal protein	Aged, canned, cured, processed, & smoked meats or fish.	Fresh, unprocessed meats and fish. Organic, grass fed, etc. when possible.
Dairy products	Milk, cheese, ice cream, butter.	Unsweetened coconut products (milk, cream, etc.), unsweetened almond milk, cultured ghee.
Vegetable oils	Canola oil, etc.	Olive oil, avocado oil, coconut oil
Seasonings	Spicy herbs (ethnic cuisines like Thai, Chinese, Mexican, Indian), mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, miso, salsa, vinegar	Garlic, mild herbs

Considerations:

- If you find you are reacting to starchier foods, you may consider removing high FODMAPS foods from your diet. For more information, see Monash University website www.med.monash.edu.au
- If you are allergic to latex, consider avoiding latex cross reactive foods: banana, avocado, chestnut, kiwi, apple, carrot, celery, papaya, potato, tomato, melons. Visit the website www.latexallergyresources.org/cross-reactive-food for more info.

Resources:

- Websites:
 - www.whole30.com for meal plans, shopping lists, recipes, etc.
 - www.aiplifestyle.com

Food & Symptom Journal

* Be sure to record eliminations and reintroductions accordingly.

Record meal contents and symptoms.	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Beverages	Symptoms (pain, urgency, frequency, leakage)
MONDAY						
TUESDAY						
WEDNESDAY						
THURSDAY						
FRIDAY						
SATURDAY						
SUNDAY						