

Women's Health **UPDATE**

Unmasking The Many Faces Of Interstitial Cystitis

(NAPSA)—Interstitial cystitis, also known as IC, is a painful medical condition that's frequently misdiagnosed because its symptoms are often mistaken for other pelvic conditions. Sufferers not only deal with painful physical symptoms but may also struggle emotionally as well.

In fact, the first-ever survey of patients with IC reveals that patients experience a high level of emotional distress and frustration from dealing with IC as well as its physical toll. The survey, conducted by the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH) with support from Ortho Women's Health & Urology, found that more than half of respondents reported a long journey to diagnosis—taking a year or more with visits to three or more health care professionals.

"The face of IC is often hidden because its symptoms often masquerade as other pelvic conditions, making it challenging to accurately diagnosis in a timely manner," says Susan Wysocki, president and CEO, National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health. "We hope that these survey results will help elevate awareness about this little-known condition and reduce the emotional and physical toll IC can have on patients and families."

IC is thought to occur when the bladder lining becomes irritated and inflamed, causing symptoms such as pain in the pelvis, bladder, back or thighs; increased need to urinate frequently or urgently; and pain

during or after sexual intercourse. Once diagnosed, IC can be successfully managed.

Research indicates that the number of people with IC may be higher than the current estimate of 2 million Americans because many are not appropriately diagnosed and continue to face the daily frustrations associated with IC. To help those who are suffering, there are new resources at www.AllAboutIC.com, including inspiring stories from patients, information about the condition, plus an online locator tool to help find an IC specialist.

One Patient's Story

Being on the LPGA tour was a childhood dream for Terry-Jo Myers. This dream was almost completely taken away from her because of interstitial cystitis. She was going to the bathroom frequently during the day and much of the night, and couldn't sleep at night. Her personal relationships also began to suffer.

After years of suffering with the pain and frustration, Terry-Jo was finally diagnosed with IC. Working with her doctor, she made lifestyle and dietary changes, and started an oral medication for treating the pain and discomfort of IC. Her symptoms gradually improved and she was able to sleep longer, eventually through the night.

"For the first time, I was able to play 18 holes of golf straight through!" says Terry-Jo. "Today, I am no longer in constant pain, and have a fantastic relationship with my husband and daughter."