

Managing Your Health

Learn All You Can About Your Medicines

Take charge of your health by talking with your doctor about each of your medicines.

- ❑ Ask your doctor what each medicine does. Find out about possible side effects. Learn whether IC patients might experience more severe side effects than other patients.
- ❑ Find out when you should take your medicines and how much you should take for each dose. Learn whether you should take your medicines on an empty stomach or with food. Also ask whether you should avoid alcoholic beverages or certain foods when you take your medicines.
- ❑ Ask your doctor whether it would be wise to start with the lowest dose possible to treat your symptoms effectively.
- ❑ Talk with your doctor about how long it will take for you to see improvement.
- ❑ Call your doctor if side effects are bothering you. Ask about alternative medicines.
- ❑ Sign up to receive emails from the FDA about safety notices or recalls for your medicines. Learn more at www.fda.gov/medwatch.

Plan ahead and be prepared to take action in case one of your medicines is not available.

- ❑ Talk with your doctor about alternative medicines.
- ❑ Ask your pharmacist to help you locate another pharmacy or supplier that has the medicines you need.
- ❑ Check the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) web site about shortages. This site offers tips on finding medicines in short supply. Visit www.fda.gov/cder/drug/shortages.
- ❑ Check the American Society of Health System-Pharmacists (ASHP) web site for ways to try to locate medicines in short supply. Go to www.ashp.org.
- ❑ Have a medicine made up at a compounding pharmacy. A compounding pharmacy mixes medicines from the individual ingredients. Sometimes, compounding pharmacists can make up from similar ingredients pills, suppositories, or instillations of medicines for insertion into the bladder.

The Interstitial Cystitis Association (ICA, www.ichelp.org) is committed to finding more effective treatments and a cure for interstitial cystitis (IC), a painful, chronic bladder condition. The ICA promotes and funds research; educates the medical community and public; advocates for IC patients, healthcare providers, and researchers; and offers support for IC patients and their families.

For more information, visit www.ichelp.org or call 800-HELP-ICA (800-435-7422).

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Putting the pieces together

110 North Washington Street • Suite 340 • Rockville, MD 20850
Website: www.ichelp.org • Toll-Free: 1-800-HELP-ICA