

what (not

Clothes may make the man and woman, but it's important to watch what you wear when IC symptoms flare. Here are some tips.

Looking good can be an important part of feeling good, but when IC symptoms flare, clothing can be a big part of what makes matters worse.

It's important to avoid tight clothing during flares, particularly items such as tight pants and undergarments that constrict the waist and pelvic region. Some IC patients find that their symptoms improve as soon as they remove constrictive clothing. Others suffer from skin sensitivity that make coarse fabrics especially uncomfortable on any part of their body, especially during flares.

The good news? Unlike many parts of living with IC, what you choose to wear is something you can control. "Life is too short to have fashion dictate your comfort level and pain threshold," one IC patient writes on ICA's Online Support Group. "Besides, you might become a fashion leader with your clothing choices."



Tops

- Skin sensitivity can be an issue for some IC patients, particularly during flares. Avoid coarse fabrics, such as wool.
- Some IC patients wear only 100 percent natural fibers, such as cotton, silk, or linen.
- Others avoid heavily dyed fabrics of all kinds, opting for whites or neutral colors.
- It's always a good idea to wash new clothes before wearing them to rinse away excess dyes or other chemicals used in their manufacture.

Pants

- Avoid tight slacks and jeans, skintight yoga pants, or jeggings that put pressure on the lower pelvis or crotch.
- Consider pants with stretchy elastic waists, or size up jeans and slacks—anywhere from a half-size to two sizes larger, depending on what feels comfortable and still fits.
- Experiment with low-rise and other alternate fits to see what feels least restrictive and most comfortable.
- Some women wear maternity pants or men's slacks, as they often offer a more generous fit in the crotch.



Keep loose!



) to wear

Laundry

- If you suffer from skin sensitivity, try using detergents free of dyes and perfumes.
- Some IC patients run an extra rinse cycle after washing to make sure that all detergents are washed out.
- Avoid using fabric softeners or dryer sheets—try hypoallergenic dryer balls to keep your clothes soft.



Undergarments

- Tight underwear, such as slimming undergarments, briefs, or thongs, should be avoided.
- Some IC patients size up with underwear or look for high cuts.
- Cotton and natural fibers tend to breathe better than undergarments made with other fabrics.

Belts/Girdles

- Avoid tight belts or girdles that constrict the waist, particularly during flares.
- Some men find suspenders a preferable alternative.

Pantyhose

- Avoid control top and other slimming hose.
- Consider leggings or thigh-high hose as alternatives.

