



Patient & Family Guide
2026

Heparin Bladder Instillation



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Heparin Bladder Instillation

What is heparin bladder instillation?

- Heparin bladder instillation is a treatment to help with **interstitial cystitis** (also called **painful bladder syndrome**).
- Interstitial cystitis symptoms include:
 - › Having to urinate (pee) often
 - › Feeling an urgent need to pee
 - › Burning pain or stinging when you pee
- Heparin bladder instillation lowers inflammation (swelling) and discomfort in your bladder.

How is this treatment done?

- You will be given a medication called **heparin** through a small catheter (thin, hollow tube) put into your bladder.
- You will have treatment once a week for 6 to 8 weeks, and then as needed. How often you will need treatment after the first 6 to 8 weeks will depend on your symptoms.

How do I get ready for my appointment?

- You may drink liquids as usual before your appointment.

2 hours before your appointment:

- **Do not drink:**

- › Tea
- › Coffee
- › Pop

These drinks can irritate (bother) your bladder.

- If you take **diuretics** (also called **water tablets or water pills**), please talk with your health care provider about whether you should stop taking these before your appointment.

What are your questions?

Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.

What will happen at my appointment?

- You may be asked to pee before your treatment. This is to empty your bladder of pee.
- We will ask you to take off your underwear and lay down on a stretcher or an exam table.
- We will put a small catheter into your bladder. This will drain any pee left in your bladder.
- We will slowly put a heparin solution (mixture) through the catheter into your bladder.
- We will then take the catheter out and you will hold the solution in your bladder for as long you comfortably can (at least 15 to 20 minutes).
- After you have held the solution for as long as you can with no discomfort, you can urinate.
- You may be asked to stay in the clinic for monitoring after your treatment.

What are the possible side effects of this treatment?

You may not have any side effects. Possible side effects include:

- Side effects that feel like your interstitial cystitis symptoms, like:
 - › Feeling the need to pee more often or more urgently
 - › Discomfort while peeing
- Infection
 - › **Call your health care provider if you have a fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) within 48 hours (2 days) after your treatment.** This can be a sign of infection.
 - › You may need to have a urine test. If you have an infection, you may need medication.
- Discomfort
 - › A hot water bottle and/or pain medication may help. Ask your health care provider what pain medication is right for you.
 - › The discomfort should go away in about 24 hours (1 day).

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your health care provider.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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