Interstitial Cystitis (IC)
A less known type of cystitis is Interstitial cystitis (IC) which is not believed to be caused by bacteria. It is a chronic inflammation of the bladder wall. It can affect both men and women, yet 90% of those affected are women.

Symptoms
- frequency of urination (up to 60 x a day)
- severe pelvic pain

Treatment
- A direct instillation of dimethyl sulfoxide into the bladder for relief of pain, antidepressants and low-acid diet.

Symptoms
The following symptoms may indicate that you are suffering from cystitis:
- A frequent and pressing urge to pass urine, while only being able to produce small amounts
- Pain, usually burning or stinging, when passing urine
- Having to get up several times in the night to go to the toilet
- Blood in the urine
- A strong or “fishy” smell to the urine
- You may also have a fever, feel generally unwell, or have a dull ache in your lower abdomen and back. These symptoms may mean the infection has spread to the kidneys, so you should contact your GP as soon as possible.

Treatment
If cystitis is suspected, your GP may send a urine specimen for analysis to see if it is infected. Meanwhile your GP may prescribe a course of antibiotics or treatment to help flush out the bladder and urethra, and make the urine a more hostile environment for any bacteria. If bacteria are...
responsible, and not resistant to the antibiotic, the symptoms should quickly clear up. Be sure to take the full course of antibiotics otherwise the bacteria might become resistant. Drinking three litres of fluid a day can help symptoms to go by flushing out the bladder. If you have recurrent attacks of cystitis your doctor may arrange for additional tests or refer you to a hospital specialist. You may have an X-ray or ultrasound scan.

Often there will be no obvious reason for recurrent infections. In this case a long course of antibiotics, lasting a month or more, may be recommended. Women who have recurrent attacks of cystitis after the menopause often benefit from hormone replacement therapy either taken systemically or locally inserted into the vagina. Sometimes cystitis symptoms may be mimicked by thrush or another infection of the vagina, or a sexually transmitted organism such as chlamydia.

Helping yourself
Generally it is a good idea to:
• Drink plenty of fluids, to avoid urinary stagnation and flush out the bladder
• Remember toilet hygiene. Always wipe yourself from front to back to avoid transferring bacteria from the bowel to the urethra
• Avoid perfumed soaps, vaginal douches, tight jeans, and other potential irritants
• Lowering the acidity of the urine by taking a teaspoon of sodium bicarbonate (baking powder) in water every six hours is a good idea if you keep getting attacks.

Cystitis is often called the “honeymoon disease”. If your symptoms are associated with making love, the following tips may help:
• Drink a glass of water before intercourse
• Wash “down below” before having sex
• After intercourse, go to the toilet to wash out any bacteria which may have entered the urethra.

A wide range of alternative and natural therapies are claimed to provide relief from cystitis. For instance, cranberry juice is said to contain a natural antibiotic that helps prevent infection. Celery and parsley act as a mild diuretic which can help flush out the bladder. Maintaining a healthy immune system by eating a balanced diet and not smoking or drinking too much alcohol will make bladder infections less likely.