

you're probably safe and can continue with the lower daily dosage. This dose reduction would be best,

*National Survey of IC Patients conducted by the CRC/ICIC in 1997.
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however, not to be begun as you approach the onset of your menstrual cycle (women) as flares are more likely to occur at that time. Begin reduction after your period has concluded by a few days. Caution is the watchword here. Have a follow-up culture done within two weeks after the dosage reduction to be on the safe side.

4. If you have successfully made one reduction in dosage, then you might want to give your body some time to adjust to the new dosage level and wait another month or two before attempting a further dosage reduction. Here, your conservative or not-so-conservative nature comes into play. You can probably do these reductions sooner, but do you want to take the chance of symptoms returning when you believe you are on your way to bladder healing?

You make the choices--you are dealing with your body, not somebody else's, and what all IC patients know is that what works for one does not necessarily work for another; in this instance, the timetable for dosage reduction. Let your body and intuition (not what timetable you just wish would happen) tell you as well as follow-up broth cultures--none of these will mislead you. Patience is the name of the game with bacterial IC. When you feel ready, repeat step #3 above until you have stopped all dosages and are encountering NO problems whatsoever. If at any time, you do have symptoms return, you simply add back whatever dosage you removed and try dosage reduction later as above until once again you have no symptoms.

5. There is no harm done if you have to backtrack a couple of times (except possibly to your psyche). Don't feel defeated or think of yourself as a failure. This is IC, remember? And if you feel the need to keep taking a small antibiotic dose at night for awhile, that too is ok--it's your security blanket, if you will. When you're ready, you'll stop that small dose as well, or you can continue to stay on it as long as you want. There is, however, no truth to the stories you may have heard as an IC patient that you have to stay on antibiotics for life--your choice only. If your bladder is healed, it is healed and you may rejoice! But as a caveat, don't jump right back into all the old bad habits (wrong eating, drinking, heavy stress levels) you might have had before IC took over your life. Take things slowly and have patience, patience, patience.

6. You've heard it said before and I'll say it again to you, there is NO magic bullet in getting over IC, so once you've achieved this marvelous experience, don't digress from what you've just learned and/or been taught. You should now be able to live a normal pre-IC life but not all at once. Take your time and savor what you have accomplished. You may find that some of those pre-IC things you thought you couldn't live without but eventually did do without in order to regain your health are

no longer important to you; you may not even want them back in your life. Enjoy, experiment and exhilarate with the new YOU because if you've gone through all of the above and more (as we all have), you ARE a new and better person than you ever thought possible. Keep it that way. You won't be sorry.

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