

IC Food Starter Pack

A gentle starting guide to common triggers,
better-tolerated foods, simple meals and food testing

If food seems to affect your bladder symptoms,
this pack can help you start simply and calmly.
Use it to explore patterns, reduce overwhelm
and find a gentler place to begin.



Common triggers

Learn which foods and drinks may trigger symptoms for many people with IC.



Starting foods

Discover better-tolerated staples to nourish your body and feel supported.



Simple meals

Easy, gentle meal ideas using everyday ingredients to build confidence.



Food testing

A calm, step-by-step approach to explore foods and spot your personal patterns.

How to use this starter pack

This pack is a starting point, not a strict forever diet.
Use it to test gently, reduce overwhelm and build
your own picture over time.

1



Start with foods
you already tolerate.

2



Change one thing
at a time.

3



Keep meals simple
while testing.

4



Track symptoms,
timing and
possible triggers.

5



Bring foods back
where possible.



Important: food may
be only one part of your
pattern. Stress, pelvic-floor
tension, hormones,
constipation and active
flares can also affect
symptoms.



Common trigger foods to test carefully

These are commonly reported triggers – not guaranteed triggers for everyone.



Coffee & energy drinks

May irritate the bladder and increase urgency for some.



Caffeinated tea

Black, green and olong teas contain caffeine.



Alcohol

Can irritate the bladder and worsen symptoms for some.



Citrus fruits & juices

Acidic fruits and juices may be irritating to some.



Tomatoes & tomato sauces

Acidic foods that may irritate sensitive bladders.



Chilli & spicy foods

Spices can trigger flaring or increase discomfort.



Chocolate

Contains caffeine and other compounds that may irritate.



Fizzy drinks

Carbonation and acids can worsen bladder symptoms.



Vinegar & pickles

High in acid and salt which may irritate the bladder.



Artificial sweeteners

May irritate the bladder or alter gut balance.



MSG / strong flavourings

May trigger sensitivity in some people.



Cranberry products

Can irritate the bladder for some people.

Portion size, timing, stress, hydration and an active flare can all affect how a food feels.

Better-tolerated starting foods

Choose plain, familiar foods first and adjust based on your own symptoms.



Proteins

- chicken
- turkey
- eggs
- white fish
- salmon
- tofu



Grains & starches

- rice
- oats
- potatoes
- sweet potatoes
- quinoa
- plain pasta



Vegetables

- cucumber
- lettuce
- spinach
- green beans
- carrots
- courgette
- broccoli



Fruits

- pears
- blueberries
- melon
- apples
- grapes



Dairy & alternatives

- milk
- lactose-free milk
- ricotta
- cottage cheese
- plain yoghurt
- oat milk



Gentle flavours

- olive oil
- butter
- parsley
- basil
- dill
- thyme
- cinnamon



Check packaged foods for acids, artificial sweeteners, strong flavourings and preservatives.



Build simple IC-friendly meals

Use familiar ingredients to keep meals calm
and easy while you learn your pattern.



Breakfast

- porridge with pear or blueberries
- eggs with toast
- plain yoghurt with oats and melon

Simple plate formula:

1 protein + 1 starch +
1 vegetable +
gentle flavour.



Lunch

- chicken and rice with cucumber
- baked potato with cottage cheese
- egg and cucumber sandwich



Dinner

- fish with potatoes and green beans
- turkey pasta with a mild herb sauce
- chicken with rice and courgette



Snacks

- rice cakes with cream cheese
- melon
- pear
- yoghurt
- boiled egg
- plain popcorn



Gentler toppings, sauces & swaps

A few flavour ideas that may feel easier than sharp, spicy or acidic extras.



Good starting ideas



Olive oil and herbs



Butter and parsley



Ricotta with basil



Cream cheese and cucumber



Yoghurt and dill



Tahini thinned with water



A mild white sauce



Shop-bought items to check



Pesto



Hummus



Mayonnaise



Stock



Gravy



Dressings and marinades



Watch for



Lemon or citric acid



Vinegar



Chilli



Tomato



Artificial sweeteners



Strong flavour enhancers



Swap spicy tomato sauces for a mild herb or creamy sauce when testing.



What to eat during a flare

When symptoms are active, simplify rather than panic-cutting everything.



Keep it simple

- ♥ Rice, potatoes, porridge
- ♥ Eggs
- ♥ Plain chicken or fish
- ♥ Mild vegetables
- ♥ Familiar snacks
- ♥ Normal hydration



What helps

- ♥ Choose foods you already know feel safe.
- ♥ Keep portions moderate.
- ♥ Avoid introducing lots of new foods or supplements at once.



When to seek help

- ♥ Seek medical advice for fever.
- ♥ Severe worsening pain.
- ♥ Difficulty passing urine.
- ♥ Visible blood that has not been assessed.



A flare day is not the best day to judge every food forever.

How to test foods without over-restricting

A calm step-by-step approach to elimination and reintroduction.

- 1  **Establish a baseline** — track symptoms, meals, stress and timing.
- 2  **Simplify selectively** — remove only your strongest suspected triggers.
- 3  **Test one item** — keep the rest of the day familiar.
- 4  **Watch the timing** — note what happens over the next hours and next day.
- 5  **Repeat unclear tests** — one bad day is a clue, not proof.
- 6  **Bring foods back where possible** — keep your final diet as broad as you can.

My Food Test Tracker

Date	Food tested	Time	Symptoms	Notes
				
				
				
				
				



Reintroduction matters.

The goal is not to live on the smallest possible diet.



Food & symptom tracker

Use this page to spot patterns without relying on memory.



Date _____



Time _____



Foods & drinks



Symptoms noticed



Timing of symptoms

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ During meal | ☐ Within 1 hour |
| ☐ 1–3 hours later | ☐ Later in the day |
| ☐ Next day | ☐ Other: _____ |



Bladder pain / burning / urgency

Rate 0 (none) to 10 (worst)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Notes: _____



Bowel / digestion notes



Stress / sleep notes



Cycle / hormones (optional)



Possible trigger thoughts



What felt okay?



Tip

You are looking for repeated patterns, not perfection.

Your next steps

This starter pack is your calm beginning —
you do not have to figure everything out at once.



Keep going gently

- ✓ Continue using your tracker.
- ✓ Keep meals simple while testing.
- ✓ Return foods where possible.



Useful IC Ally resources

-  Read the full blog: *The Ultimate IC Food List*
-  Download free resources
-  Try the phenotype identification aid



If you want more support

The full food support pack can include a fuller food list, printable planners, tracking pages, reintroduction support and deeper guidance.



Free resources: ically.life/free-resources-for-ic-bps



Phenotype aid: phenotype-aid.ic-ally.com



More support: IC Ally

Small patterns become clearer with time, not pressure.