**Presentation script**

**BACK AND FORTH**

**Firstly can you explain what IC is to you and then how it affects your daily life?**

Interstitial Cystitis (IC) is a chronic painful bladder condition. I was finally diagnosed with it last year (2022) after years of going back to doctor after doctor and surgery after surgery for endometriosis and no one would understand why I was still having so much pain in my daily life. I had many doctors tell me it was all in my head until finally I found a doctor that would listen to me and went deeper to find the source. Since finding out I now suffer from 2 chronic illness I have had to change certain things in my life. I have changed my diet in ways that I try to stay away or at least limit my intake of what triggers my flare ups. However it’s not as easy as that sounds unfortunately. I have learnt to listen to my body and react accordingly. Rest when I use to push myself. I now drink water like it’s going out of fashion as that helps to flush me out so when I do eat and drink certain foods the acid from them doesn’t linger in my bladder.

**What happen when you have a flare up and how does that impact your day to day life?**

When a flare up hits I suffer from pain around my bladder, kidneys; pretty much the pain just wraps around from my front to back. Sometimes I can handle the pain with heat packs and Panadol, other times I need stronger painkillers like tramadol. When it gets really bad I get what they call brain fog. At times I get shaky and my sugar levels go way down and I get very dizzy. When this happens the most I can do some days is just have a shower and even then that can be too much so I spend my day in bed or on the couch. This can last from a few hours to days on end just depending. This can be very hard mentally and holding down jobs and having a social life. It can all be impacted. Just this year alone I can count on my hand how many times I’ve managed to work a full week at work and we are about to enter into March. It can also put a strain on your financials due to missed work. I have personally had to step back at work due to this and other medical issues.

**How would this app help your day to day life on the monitoring of this condition?**

This app would help me immensely as my biggest struggle I have found is remembering to document my intake. Pervious apps I have tried I end up giving up on as we all know life gets in the way and I found sometimes I could go a day or so before I got a chance to get back to it and then I was racking my brain to remember what I had eaten and was the pain at this time or that time. The other struggle I have is trying to work out what actually causes flare ups as I soon found out with trying to eliminate foods is I would eat something and be fine one day and think okay this is good than a few days to a week later I would eat the same food and have a completely different reaction to it so I definitely believe that certain times of the month affect me more so than others. I have been taking medication that my doctor prescribed me and that has seemed to help a lot as well as the rule of eat small amount of trigger foods and then immediately after drink 1-2 cups of water.

**TREATMENT**

There is no cure for this condition but there are some relief options for sufferers.

The easy and non-invasive treatment plans to reduce the risk or flare ups include maintaining hydration.

Drinking plenty of water can water down the acidity of most food groups which can ease the irritation and pain.

Staying away from acidic food groups. The acid from the food can cause pain against the bladder walls giving burning sensations. Carbonated drinks, alcohol, caffeine, citrus products and foods containing high concentrations of vitamin C can all cause issues.

Reducing stress in your life is a good tip for anyone but especially IC sufferers. Smoking should be stopped as it can also increase pain and exercise regularly.

If the above doesn’t work then more aggressive measures can be taken such as bladder instillations which are administered and can help repair the bladder but would need regular injections to keep up with the treatment plan. There are many oral drug options that can interfere with neurochemicals that cause the pain and inflammation to the bladder.

Nerve stimulation techniques can be used to relieve the pain by reducing urinary frequency.

In the most severe and rare cases surgery can be performed to burn off or cut away ulcers that can be inside the bladder or a patch of intestine can be used to patch the holes in the bladder lining.

All these forms of treatments can vary from person to person and should not be taken lightly without first taking the easy steps to eliminate diet and talking to healthcare professionals.