Intravesical BCG treatment
Patient information
**What does the treatment involve?**

Your doctor has recommended you have this treatment for your bladder cancer. You have a type of bladder cancer that affects the lining of your bladder. This type of cancer is treated with an operation called TURBT (Trans Urethral Resection of Bladder Tumour) to remove all or part of the cancer internally using telescopic instruments. This extra treatment is also given to get rid of any small areas of cancer not removed by the operation, and to also help prevent your cancer from coming back.

This extra treatment involves inserting a drug through a catheter, directly into your bladder, and is called “Intravesical Immunotherapy”.

The treatment is given in courses. Most patients have 6 doses in total, each given at weekly intervals. Some patients require additional treatment and your doctor will advise you if you need to have more treatment.

**Before you have your treatment**

Please ensure you tell the nurse:

- About any other treatments you are having, for example, radiotherapy or any medications
- If you are planned to come into hospital for any other treatments which will coincide with this treatment
- If you are feeling unwell or feel that you may have a urine infection - this is important throughout the course of your treatment
- If you are passing a lot of blood in your urine
- If you have had TB in the past (tuberculosis)
- If you have any problems with incontinence.
How is the treatment given?
A catheter tube will be inserted into your bladder. A small amount of fluid containing the drug is then passed through the catheter into the bladder where it will need to remain for at least one hour if it is to be effective. The catheter tube is usually removed after the drug has been put in your bladder. During this time you can move around freely. You may sit in a chair if you wish and you do not need to remain in bed. You may experience a mild discomfort in your bladder at this time.

What happens after the treatment has been given?
When the treatment is finished, you will be asked to pass urine into the toilet. Please do not flush the toilet at this point. Let your nurse know when you are going to pass urine into the toilet as this should be followed by pouring two cups of bleach into the toilet bowl, and letting it stand for 15 minutes before flushing. Leave the bathroom window open. It is important to wash your hands thoroughly with warm soapy water afterwards. If you have difficulty getting to the toilet on time or feel you are not emptying your bladder adequately, inform the nurse caring for you and a disposable receptacle will be provided.

Once you have finished your treatment for the day, you will be allowed to return home. Please make sure you have your appointment for your next treatment before you leave the department.

The drug will remain active for approximately 3 days after it has been given so you must continue to be careful when going to the toilet and when washing yourself to prevent urine from coming into contact with your skin and clothes.

- You are advised to sit down when passing urine and put the toilet lid down when flushing the toilet to prevent splashing or urine. If you spill urine on your skin wash your skin with copious amounts of soapy water.
If you do spill urine onto your clothing, it is advisable to wash them separately to anything else. You are advised to wear disposable gloves to handle any clothing which is contaminated with urine.

You can eat and drink whatever you want and you do not need to take any special precautions with crockery as they will not be affected by the treatment.

**Are there any side effects from the treatment?**

Most patients only experience mild symptoms from the drug that affect only their bladder, such as feeling that you need to pass urine more frequently than normal for 2-3 days. This is due to irritation from the drug. You can help to relieve these symptoms by drinking 3 litres of fluid a day which will dilute your urine.

A small number of patients have had a severe reaction to this drug which can be potentially fatal if not treated promptly. This is called BCG sepsis.

**What to watch out for:**

- Fever and chills lasting more than 24 hours after treatment
- Joint pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Cough
- Skin rash
- Severe fatigue (tiredness)
- It is also important that you are not given BCG treatment if you have a urine infection.

**What to watch out for:**

- Blood in the urine
- A frequent urge to urinate
- Painful urination.
If you develop any of the above, please tell the hospital staff immediately as you may need treating with an antibiotic.

**Are my friends and family at risk?**

No. Normal social contact will not result in contamination. You do not need to restrict your movements and normal routine at all provided you feel fit enough.

**What about sexual intercourse?**

You are advised to avoid having sexual intercourse for 3 days following the treatment. During the course of your treatment, it is advisable to use a condom to prevent contamination with the BCG drugs and pregnancy.

The information contained in this leaflet is meant to answer commonly asked questions and is not intended to replace discussion with your doctors and nurses.

If you have any more questions you can either discuss them with your doctor at your next appointment or with the nursing staff when you attend for your treatment.

Use the space below to write any questions you may have:

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