

BCG Therapy - Intravesical Treatment for Bladder Cancer

Your doctor has recommended that you be treated with Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) Therapy. BCG is an **intravesical** therapy. Intravesical is when a liquid medicine is placed into your bladder through a catheter—a thin, flexible tube.

BCG is the best treatment for your type of bladder cancer. It is a live Tuberculosis (TB) vaccine that has been weakened to reduce the risk of infection. This will help your body's immune system fight the cancer cells. BCG lowers the chance that your cancer will return or continue to grow. This treatment is safe and has few side effects.

BCG therapy is usually given 1 time each week for 6 weeks. This treatment can also be given 1 time each week for 3 weeks for maintenance therapy.

To prevent your cancer from coming back, you might be asked to continue to have BCG maintenance treatments for up to 3 years. You will likely have a cystoscope every 3 months for up to 3 years.

Before Your Treatment

- **Do not** drink anything for 4 hours before your treatment.
- You will be given a form called, the Quantitative Symptom Score Sheet to write down any symptoms you have.
- On the day of your first treatment, you will fill in the Pre-Treatment column on the form. Your nurse will help you fill out this information.
- Bring your Quantitative Symptom Score Sheet with you to each visit. It is important to fill it out around the same time each day. Your nurse will talk with you about your symptoms before your treatment.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

On the Day of Your Treatment

- You will be asked to undress from the waist down and will be given a sheet to cover yourself.
- Your nurse will ask you to lie on your back on the exam table.
- A cleansing solution called Betadine will be used on your genital area. This solution helps to lower the risk of infection from your catheter placement. Tell your nurse if you are allergic to iodine or shellfish.
- Lidocaine gel, a numbing medicine, may be placed into your urethra to make the catheter placement more comfortable. Your urethra is the tube that carries urine out of your body.
- The catheter will be placed into your urethra.
- This catheter will let the urine drain from your bladder. Once the urine is drained, BCG will be placed into your bladder through the same catheter.
- After the BCG is given, the catheter is removed. The BCG will remain in your bladder.
- You will need to lie flat for **15 minutes** after the procedure. After 15 minutes, you will be able to get up, wash your genital area and get dressed.
- You will wear a pad home to soak up any liquid that may leak out.

After Your Treatment

- **Do not** drink anything for 2 hours after your treatment. After 2 hours, drink plenty of water to flush your bladder.
- To keep the BCG in your bladder, do not urinate for at least 2 hours, if possible. After 2 hours, you may urinate as needed. **Do not** hold your urine for longer than 3 hours.
- Write down how long you held the medicine in your bladder on your Quantitative Symptom Score Sheet. Your nurse will ask you for this information at each visit.
- You may return to your normal activities.

Safety Precautions

- **Use the same toilet** in your home each time you urinate.
- To keep from splashing or spraying, **sit on the toilet when you urinate.**
- **During the first 6 hours after treatment, follow these steps each time after you urinate:**
 - ▶ **Do not flush the toilet** when you finish urinating.
 - ▶ Wash your hands and genital area with soap and warm water after each time you urinate to keep your skin from being irritated.
 - ▶ **Before you flush,** you must first pour 1 cup of bleach into the toilet, and let it sit for 15 minutes. You should then close the lid and flush the toilet.
 - ▶ Any clothes or linens that have urine on them should be washed on the hot cycle in a washing machine. Wash soiled laundry separately.
 - ▶ If urine splashes or spills on the floor, toilet seat or other areas, clean it up with a water and bleach mixture (1/2 cup bleach and 4 cups of water).
- **If you are sexually active you or your partner must wear a condom** during your 6 weeks of treatment and for 1 week after your last treatment.

Side Effects

These symptoms usually do not last longer than 3 to 5 days. There are medicines that can help reduce side effects. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of the following:

- Fever
- Frequent urination
- Urgent need to urinate
- Blood in your urine
- Burning while you urinate
- Bladder spasms or pain
- Arthritic or joint pain
- Flu-like symptoms

Call your doctor right away if you have a temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit (38.6 degrees Celsius) or higher.