

Gemcitabine Chemotherapy - Intravesical Treatment for Bladder Cancer

Your health care provider has recommended that your bladder cancer be treated with gemcitabine (Gemzar) **intravesical** therapy. Intravesical therapy is when a liquid medicine is placed into your bladder through a thin, flexible tube called a catheter.

Gemcitabine is a chemotherapy drug used to treat superficial bladder cancer. This type of bladder cancer is found on the inside lining of the bladder. This chemotherapy drug is given directly into the bladder to help kill cancer cells without causing harm to other parts of the body. The medicine should be held in the bladder for **60 minutes**.

To start, gemcitabine is usually given 1 time each week for 6 weeks. This treatment can also be given 1 time each week every 4 weeks for maintenance therapy. Maintenance therapy duration is determined by your health care provider.

Before Your Treatment

- Tell your nurse or doctor if you have trouble holding your urine for 60 minutes or other problems urinating.
- If you have problems holding your urine, consider eliminating caffeine and alcohol for 24 hours before your treatment.
- **Do not** drink anything for 4 hours before your treatment to minimize urine production. You may have a few sips of water to take your pre-treatment medicines, which include:
 - ▶ **Sodium Bicarbonate 1300 mg** (two 650 mg tablets) to be taken the night before and the morning of your treatment.
 - ▶ **Zofran 4mg** to be taken the morning of 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.

- ▶ Please contact your health care provider's office if you have not been prescribed these medicines prior to (before) your first treatment.
- It is best to have some urine in your bladder before your treatment. This helps your nurse ensure correct catheter placement.
- Female patients with child-bearing potential will need a negative urine pregnancy test completed within 7 days or on the day of initial treatment.

On the Day of Your Treatment

- You will be evaluated by the treatment nurse. If cleared for treatment, the nurse will inform the pharmacy to begin mixing the chemotherapy.
- You will need to hold your bladder for the duration of 60 minutes. If you cannot hold your urine, let your nurse know.
- Tell your nurse if you have pain or bladder spasms. There may be medicines that can help you feel more comfortable during your next treatment.
- When the chemotherapy is ready, the nurse will complete all necessary medication checks. The nurse will instruct you to undress from the waist down and lie on your back on a hospital bed. A top sheet will be given to you to cover yourself.
- The nurse will begin the treatment by preparing the catheter to be inserted into your urethra. Your urethra is the tube that carries urine from the bladder and out of your body. Lubrication will be used to make the catheter placement more comfortable.
- The catheter will be carefully advanced into your urethra. The nurse will observe for urine to confirm placement and will drain the urine from your bladder.
- Once the urine is drained, gemcitabine will be put into your bladder through the same catheter. The catheter is then removed to keep the medicine 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.
- Incontinence pads or briefs are available upon request to soak up any liquid that may leak out.

After Your Treatment

- You may go straight home. You may drive if you were not given any medicine that may affect your judgement.
- **Do not** drink anything for 1 hour after your treatment. After 1 hour, drink plenty of water to flush your bladder.
- To keep the gemcitabine in your bladder, do not urinate for at least 1 hour, if possible. **After 1 hour, you may urinate as needed.**
- Record or make note of any new bladder symptoms (i.e. spasms, urgency, frequency) you have after treatment, especially in the first few days. This can help your treatment team adjust your care plan.
- You may return to your normal activities.

Safety Precautions

- **Use the same toilet** in your home each time you urinate for 6 hours after your treatment.
- 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:**
 - ▶ Wash your hands and genital area with soap and warm water each time after you urinate to keep your skin from being irritated.
 - ▶ **Before you flush,** close the lid of 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 using dish soap or laundry detergent and water. Rinse with clean water.
- **If you are sexually active, you or your partner must wear a condom** during 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 health care provider 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
- Nausea

Call your health care provider right away if you have a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38.6 degrees Celsius) or higher, or if you suspect a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI).