

## Department of Urology

# About BCG Bladder Treatment

Your doctor has explained to you that you have a bladder condition called superficial bladder cancer. He may have described this condition as being like warts' or growths in your bladder. These growths may recur and in order to reduce the likelihood of this happening your doctor has prescribed a drug treatment for your bladder. The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you about this treatment.

### What treatment am I having?

Your doctor has prescribed a drug called BCG, which was originally developed as a vaccine for tuberculosis, but it is also useful in treating bladder cancer. It appears by working to stimulating the body's natural defences against the disease. Your doctor will have prescribed either weekly treatments for six weeks or maintenance treatments every 6 months.

### How is the treatment given?

The nurse carrying out your treatment passes a fine tube called a catheter into your bladder. After draining any urine out of your bladder, the drug is introduced into your bladder through the catheter. The catheter is usually then removed and you are asked to hold the drug in your bladder for at least one hour and if possible for two hours. You will be expected to remain in hospital for this time, during which you will be asked to wait in a designated area. After your treatment you will be asked to empty your bladder into the bedpan or urinal provided. You will be offered a cup of tea before you go home and the nurse will confirm your next treatment date before you leave the hospital.

If no difficulties have been experienced during the first treatment, the nurse may allow you to go home directly after the medication has been put into your bladder for the remainder of the course. If you are allowed to go home, please do not have any drinks until you have held the drug for the prescribed period of time.

### What side effects may I experience?

Because the drug goes directly into your bladder and not into your blood stream, there are relatively few side effects. However you may experience pain or burning when you pass urine, blood in your urine, or having to pass urine more frequently. You may also experience flu like symptoms such as fever, headache, joint pain and fatigue or a skin rash. If these symptoms persist for more than two days or are very severe, you should

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contact your doctor. If you are concerned about the effect the treatment is having on you, ring the hospital on **024 7696 5380** or contact your own GP.

## **What should I do before each treatment?**

Do not drink any fluids for four hours before your treatment. However you should take your routine medicines with a minimal amount of water. You may have your breakfast and/or lunch. Have a bath or shower before attending the hospital for your treatment.

## **How should I look after myself afterwards?**

For the first six hours after each treatment you should take special precautions when you pass urine. Men should sit down to pass urine to avoid splashing. Wash your hands and genital area with soap and water each time you pass urine. If any urine spills onto your skin, wash with soap and water. Do not use moisturisers. Drink plenty of fluids for the rest of the day of the treatment to flush any remaining drug out of your system. If you are sexually active, the male partner should use a condom during sexual activity for the first forty-eight hours after each treatment

**You should take care to prevent children coming into contact with the drug or with urine contaminated with the drug.**

### **Follow up:**

A further telescopic examination of your bladder will be carried out 6-8 weeks after your course of treatment is complete. You will be notified of this by post in due course.

### **Useful contact numbers:**

**Ward 33** **024 7696 5380**

If you have any questions or concerns about your diagnosis or treatment and would like to discuss them, please contact:

**Sister Claire Milligan:** **024 7696 5149**

## Patient Information

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The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 5149 and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

### **Document History**

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Department	Urology
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