

Patient Information about Bladder Cancer

<http://www.urologychannel.com/patient-information-bladder-cancer/index.shtml>

Bladder cancer may be confined to the bladder lining (called superficial bladder cancer) or can spread beyond the lining to surrounding tissues (called invasive bladder cancer). Risk factors for bladder cancer include smoking, secondhand smoke, chronic bladder infection, hereditary factors (genetics), diet, treatment with radiation therapy or certain drugs, and cancer-causing chemicals (e.g., dyes).

Bladder cancer symptoms include blood in the urine (hematuria), frequent urination, and painful urination. Treatment for bladder cancer depends on the type and stage of the cancer and may involve surgery, chemotherapy, and/or radiation therapy. In some cases, the bladder is partially or completely removed.

Here are some questions to ask your oncology team (e.g., oncologist, radiation oncologist, surgeon, urologist) about bladder cancer. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like to have answered, and bring it with you to your next doctor's appointment. The more information you have about your condition, the easier it will be to work with your health care team to develop a bladder cancer treatment plan.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Bladder Cancer Diagnosis

- Why do you suspect I have bladder cancer?
- What other conditions may cause blood in the urine, frequent urination, and painful urination?
- Does my history of smoking or secondhand smoke exposure or my family history increase my risk for bladder cancer?
- Might I have been exposed to cancer-causing chemicals at work?
- What types of tests will be performed to diagnose or rule out bladder cancer?
- Might these tests involve a bladder biopsy? Why or why not?
- What do these bladder cancer tests involve?
- How should I prepare for these tests?
- When will test results be available? Date:

- Should I call for the results or will someone contact me?
Telephone number to call:
- Who will explain these results to me? Doctor:
- What is the type and stage of my bladder cancer?
- How large is my bladder tumor?
- Is the tumor superficial or invasive?
- Have bladder cancer cells spread to my lymph nodes or to other organs?
- Is my tumor fast- or slow-growing?

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Bladder Cancer Treatment

- What are my treatment options for cancer of the bladder?
- What course of treatment do you recommend? Why do you recommend this treatment?
- What does this treatment involve?
- What are the benefits, risks, and possible complications associated with this bladder cancer treatment?
- How will treatment affect my daily life?
- Should I get a second or third opinion before starting treatment? Why or why not?
- Am I a candidate for bladder cancer surgery? Why or why not?
- If surgery will be performed, what type of surgical procedure do you recommend?
- Can my tumor be removed through transurethral resection?
- Might my bladder need to be partially or completely removed?

- If so, will I need to use a urine-collecting bag? What does this involve?
- How long will I be in the hospital after surgery?
- What should I expect during the recovery period?
Restrictions:
- What are the possible complications of bladder cancer surgery?
- What should I do if I experience complications after surgery?
Telephone number to call:
- Might I need chemotherapy to treat my bladder cancer? Why or why not?
- If chemotherapy is necessary, will the drugs be administered orally or intravenously or will chemotherapy be infused into the bladder?
- What are possible side effects of chemotherapy?
- How can I help reduce these side effects and help myself feel better during treatment?
- Might I need radiation therapy?
- If so, do you recommend external or internal radiation therapy?
- What side effects are associated with this type of radiation therapy? How can I reduce the severity of these side effects?
- Is immunotherapy or photodynamic therapy a possible treatment option at this time? Why or why not?
- Are there any experimental treatments that might be helpful?
- Do you recommend that I participate in a bladder cancer clinical trial? Why or why not?
- What is my prognosis?
- Should I be concerned about bladder cancer recurrence?

