

**Intravesical (Bladder) Chemotherapy**  
**Urology**  
**Patient information Leaflet**

Under review

This leaflet should be used in conjunction with the cancerbackup booklet entitled 'Early (superficial bladder) cancer' Please ask your Nurse Specialist if you have not received this.

## Why do I need Mitomycin C treatment?

You have or have had superficial bladder cancer, which is the most common type of bladder cancer. You have already had a procedure TUR BT (trans-urethral resection of bladder tumour) to remove the tumour(s) from your bladder.

You will now have regular Cystoscopies to check for any tumour recurrence. After each check Cystoscopy, your doctor will tell you if your tumour(s) have returned.

Although superficial bladder tumour's can mostly be dealt with by surgery alone, your surgeon may want you to have an additional form of treatment.

Your doctor has recommended that you have intravesical chemotherapy. This treatment involves placing a substance called Mitomycin-C, directly into your bladder. This drug is a form of chemotherapy that can destroy cancer cells. However, because it is instilled directly into your bladder you should not suffer from the side effects normally associated with chemotherapy.

Research has show that intravesical chemotherapy is beneficial because it reduces the risk of recurrence of the disease, therefore reducing the need for further surgical resections. (Trans-urethral resection of bladder tumour)

**This leaflet has been designed to give you the facts about your treatment. We believe that time spent understanding your treatment will help to reduce your fears and help you to know what to expect.**

## What does the treatment involve?

You will be asked to attend the Urology Clinics at Corbett Hospital once a week for six weeks (usually on a Tuesday afternoon), each visit lasting approximately one hour (or less).

The nurse will explain the procedure and will be able to answer any questions that you have.

## Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to verbally give your consent that you agree to have the procedure and understand what it involves.

## How is the treatment given?

You will be asked to empty your bladder before the treatment is given. A fine lubricated tube called a catheter is passed into the bladder through the urethra (water pipe) and the medication (50mls of coloured liquid) is given through it. The catheter is then removed completely. You will be asked not to go to the toilet for the next hour in order to hold the medication in the bladder, allowing it to treat the bladder lining.

On your first visit you may be advised to stay at the hospital for this hour and pass urine before you leave. If all goes well, for the following weeks you may travel home once the treatment has been given and pass urine at home at the end of the hour.

It does not matter too much if the medication stays in your bladder for slightly longer than the hour, but there is no further benefit after an hour and it should not be held for more than two hours.

## Advice following your treatment

If you are a man you must sit down to pass urine for the first 2-3 times after your treatment. If Mitomycin comes into contact with the skin you may develop some irritation or a rash. To help prevent this, wash your hands and genital area with soap and water after passing urine for the first 2-3 times after your treatment.

After the first two times you pass urine following your treatment please put bleach into the toilet and leave for 15minutes before flushing. This renders the chemotherapy harmless.

To prevent irritation to yourself or your partner you are advised to use a condom or refrain from sexual intercourse for 48hrs following the treatment. Pregnant women should not receive this type of treatment so if you think you are pregnant let your nurses know. Women should also not breast feed while receiving this type of treatment,

Once you have passed the medication out in your urine, drink more fluid than usual to flush your bladder through, although you may wish to reduce the amount you drink after 8 pm so you have a good nights sleep.

## Possible side effects

After your treatment you may notice.

- Frequent passing of urine
- Some blood in the urine
- Some discolouration of the urine
- Discomfort on passing urine (like cystitis)

These symptoms will usually settle quickly if you drink plenty to 'flush the system'. These symptoms can be worse in the second half of the course.

Less commonly some patients experience.

- Rash on the hands, feet or trunk
- Rash or sore inflamed areas around the genitals.

If these occur, you may find the irritation is relieved by an antihistamine either in tablet form or a cream applied to the affected area. If you develop a rash please contact the Urology Nurses or your GP as you may be allergic to this type of treatment.

If you notice that your urine is smelly or cloudy you should contact your GP as this may indicate a urine infection. You will need to give a urine sample and you may possibly need antibiotics. This is unlikely to be due to the Mitomycin-C, but can happen after Catheterisation.

Because Mitomycin C is given directly into the bladder, you will not experience, nausea, vomiting or hair loss.

### **Serious side effects**

Serious side effects are extremely rare with this type of treatment however if you develop shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing or facial swelling it may be due to an severe allergic reaction and you should seek medical attention straight away.

### **What are the alternatives?**

There are other intravesical chemotherapies and research has not found anyone to be superior. They all have the same possible side effects.

Another alternative treatment is intravesical immunotherapy. This involves a similar procedure to Mitomycin-C, where a substance called BCG (Bacillus Calmette Guerin) is introduced into your bladder. This substance can destroy cancer cells by stimulating the immune system to become active in the bladder. This treatment aims to kill off any cancer cells that might be growing back or that have been left within the bladder lining. This is usually used for more aggressive or recurrent tumour's and generally causes more side effects.

There are no known alternative none medical treatments that have undergone research and are known to be effective, However as smoking is known to be a risk factor to developing bladder cancer stopping may limit your risk of recurrence.

## Further appointments

A check Cystoscopy is performed six to 12 weeks after completing the course of Mitomycin-C to find out how successful the treatment has been. You will be sent an appointment for this in the post. If you do not receive an appointment please let us know.

## Further information

If you require any further information regarding our services, you can contact:

**Caroline Salt**

**Karen Davies**

**Urology Nurse Specialists**

The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust.

Telephone: 01384 456111 Extension: **2873** Or 07787512834

## Useful contacts

Cancer Support: provides help, support and information for people with cancer 10, Ednam Road, Dudley, DY1 1JX. Tel 01384 231232

Cancerbackup: UK based charity giving up to date cancer information, support and practical advice.

[www.cancerbackup.org.uk](http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk) 0808 800 1234

Macmillan Cancer Support: provides practical, medical, emotional and financial support to those affected by cancer.

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk). 0808 808 2020

Cancer Research UK: provides information and supports research into cancer 020 7121 6699 [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org) 020 7121 6699

Adverse event reporting: For reporting any adverse reaction to treatment

[www.yellowcard.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.gov.uk)

