

MAINTENANCE INTRAVESICAL BCG TREATMENT

What is intravesical BCG?

BCG (Bacillus Calmette Guerin) is a live vaccine normally used to inoculate against TB. When it is put into the bladder it causes an inflammatory reaction to occur there. This inflammation seems to destroy the cancerous cells, although it is not yet clear exactly how it does this. However, BCG has been used very successfully worldwide to treat and prevent the recurrence of superficial bladder cancer.

Why do I need further BCG treatment?

Your doctor has recommended that you have a further course of intravesical BCG to help reduce the chance of your bladder cancer returning. Research has shown that by giving extra courses of BCG bladder cancer recurrence has been reduced.

How many treatments will I have?

Usually you will have a course of 3 treatments (i.e. once a week for three weeks).

Is the treatment dose different from the last course?

No, the dose is the same.

Is there anything I need to do before treatment?

You should not drink too much fluid for 8 hours before the treatment. One glass of water may be taken with breakfast. If you drink as little as possible the kidneys will produce less urine and thus prevent the dilution of the BCG when it is in your bladder. It will also make it easier for you to retain the treatment in the bladder for the necessary amount of time. If you normally take water tablets (diuretics) take them after your BCG session rather than first thing in the morning for your treatment days.

Where do I come for the treatment?

You will be asked to come to the Kidney and Urology Clinic once a week for 3 weeks you will be sent an appointment time.

How long does the treatment take?

You will be in hospital for about 2 hours for your first appointment. If you wish, you may go home straight after treatment on subsequent appointments. We try hard to keep to your appointment, but sometimes unavoidable delays do occur. You should feel well enough to drive yourself home or take public transport after the treatment. However, if you are elderly or infirm, please arrange for a friend or relative to collect you.

Who gives the treatment?

The Specialist Urology Nurse gives the treatment.

What will happen when I arrive?

The specialist nurse will be contacted. You will be shown to a seat in the waiting area. The specialist urology nurse will take you into a treatment room and ask for a urine specimen. You will then be asked to change into a gown and lie on a couch.

How is the treatment given?

A catheter tube is passed into the bladder. The BCG, which is in 50mls (1½oz.) of fluid, is then passed via the catheter into the bladder. The catheter is then removed.

You are asked not to pass urine for the next 2 hours. It is during this time that the treatment is working to destroy the cancerous cells or prevent them from recurring. Please bring something with you that will help pass the time, e.g. books, magazines, personal stereo

What to do after each treatment

When the 2 hours are finished (or sooner if you are unable to hold on that long) use one of the toilets to pass urine (men should sit rather than stand to urinate). Please check with the nurses which toilet to use. Do not flush the toilet but tell one of the nurses so that he/she can put strong disinfectant into the toilet and a notice on the door asking other patients not to use it; this is because BCG is a live vaccine. You can then go home.

For 6 hours after the treatment you need to do the following;

1. Men need to sit rather than stand to urinate (to prevent splashing).
2. After passing urine, pour 2 cups of undiluted liquid household bleach into the toilet and let it stand for 15 minutes before flushing.
3. Drink 2.5 to 3 litres (5-6 pints) of fluids for the first 24 hours after the treatment to flush any remaining drug out of the bladder. This will also help prevent bladder irritability.
4. If sexually active, engage in protective intercourse (i.e. with a condom) for one week after the treatment.

Are there any possible side effects?

Because the drug goes directly into the bladder, the common side effects are on the bladder itself.

- You will not lose your hair (this is a common worry).
- You may have increased frequency and urgency to pass urine.
- You may also experience a small amount of bleeding and discomfort when passing urine. Drinking plenty of fluids will help.

If any of these symptoms persist for more than 24 hours, or you are passing offensive smelling urine you should contact your GP or Clinical nurse specialist because you may have a water infection.

Other less common side effects are:

Fever and chills	Skin rash
Joint pain	Fatigue
Nausea and vomiting	Cough

Again, if any of these symptoms persist for more than 24 hours you should contact your GP or the Clinical nurse specialist.

What drugs may interfere with the treatment?

Drugs and therapy that suppress your immune system, including radiation, can interfere with how well the malignant cells in the bladder respond to the treatment and may increase the risk of bone and other infections. That is why it is important to make sure the consultant or the specialist nurses are aware of all drugs you are taking before beginning your treatment.

What will happen after I finish the BCG maintenance course?

Approximately 3 months after the treatment course has finished you will be sent a date for a flexible cystoscopy (see '*Having a flexible cystoscopy*' leaflet). If no cancer is seen in your bladder when you have the flexible cystoscopy the doctor may recommend that you continue with further courses of BCG.

If your bladder remains free from cancer this maintenance treatment may continue for up to 3 years following your induction (6 week) course. (e.g. Induction course given January 2010; BCG maintenance course finishes January 2013).

Below is an example of a treatment timetable (timings may vary):

Induction course

<i>8 weeks</i>	<i>GA cystoscopy and biopsy.</i>
	<i>3 months maintenance course</i>
<i>6 months</i>	<i>flexible cystoscopy</i>
	<i>9 months maintenance course</i>
<i>1 year</i>	<i>flexible cystoscopy</i>
	<i>15 months maintenance course</i>
<i>18 months</i>	<i>flexible cystoscopy</i>
	<i>21 months maintenance course</i>
<i>2 years</i>	<i>flexible cystoscopy</i>
	<i>27 months maintenance course</i>
<i>30 months</i>	<i>flexible cystoscopy</i>
	<i>33 months maintenance course</i>
<i>3 years</i>	<i>flexible cystoscopy</i>

We hope these details are of help to you.

If you have any worries or queries, do not hesitate to contact the Consultant.

Telephone: 020 7317 7751
Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm