

Care and treatment of bladder cancer at the Royal Free

Introduction

This leaflet gives you some general information about the treatment you may receive as someone who has been newly diagnosed with bladder cancer and explains the care pathway you are about to embark upon at the Royal Free Hospital.

Treating bladder cancer

The treatment you receive will depend on your general health, the type of cancer, whether it has spread, the likely effects of treatment on the cancer and your age.

Written information

Your key worker will provide you with further written information on bladder cancer and specific treatments related to your condition. A copy of the doctor's letters to your GP will be automatically sent to you unless you prefer not to see them.

Tests

You may already have had one or more tests but your doctors may require routine tests to look at the cancer and to find out whether it has spread.

You may require one or more of the following tests:

- CT scan: this is a scan to look at your chest, abdomen and pelvis.
- A bone scan: this scan looks at all the bones in your body.
- Chest x ray: to check your lungs and heart are healthy.
- Intravenous urogram: This looks at your kidneys and bladder.
- MRI scan: This is similar to a CT scan.
- Ultrasound scan: This looks at your kidneys, bladder and pelvis.

Results

Once we have the results of all your tests the multidisciplinary team (MDT) will look at the results and discuss the best treatment options for you. Your key worker will then arrange an appointment for you to come to clinic to discuss the results and any treatments you may need. Most people find it helpful to bring a relative or friend to this appointment.

Multidisciplinary team (MDT) & Specialist Multidisciplinary team (SMDT)

At the Royal Free you will be looked after by a team of people (MDT) who meet regularly to discuss patients' results and decide the best treatment available. The Royal Free also joins

the Whittington and UCL hospitals MDT, to discuss difficult cases and get expert opinions; this is known as the (SMDT).

The people who attend the SMDT meetings are:

- Urologist (surgeon)
- Clinical oncologist (specialist doctor in cancer treatments)
- Radiologist (who looks at your scans)
- Histocytopathologist (who looks at tissue samples)
- Clinical nurse specialist & research nurse

Treatment

The treatment options for cancer of the bladder include:

- Active surveillance (monitoring) this means having regular cystoscopies (telescope examinations) and is useful to check that the cancer has not returned.
- Radiotherapy: External (conformal) radiotherapy to the bladder. This is when radiation beams are shone at the cancer from outside the body.
- Bladder instillations. This is when the bladder is 'washed out' with a chemical solution.
- Surgery: Sometimes some or the entire bladder needs removing.
- Chemotherapy: This is when a drug is given into the vein to try and shrink the cancer.

These treatments can be used in combination and will be discussed with you. You will be given separate information about them. Please ask for more details if you want them.

Complementary therapy

All patients can access the massage and reflexology service at any time during treatment. The doctor can refer you to this service.

Additional support

The hospital has a Macmillan Cancer Information Centre which has a selection of books and leaflets which cover different issues which affect people with cancer. This is located in the Oncology clinic, Ground Floor and is open Mon- Fri, 9am – 5 pm.

There are many organisations that offer support and advice to people who have bladder cancer. For example:

Cancerbacup 0808 800 1234 www.cancerbacup.org.uk

Macmillan Cancerline 0808 808 2020 www.macmillan.org

Marie Curie Cancer Care 020 7235 3325 www.mariecurie.org.uk