

# Having bladder instillation therapy (BCG)

Department of Urology

Information for patients

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## Introduction

Your consultant has prescribed a course of treatment for you called bladder instillation therapy.

### What is bladder instillation therapy?

This is a course of treatment used to treat cancerous cells or tissues inside your bladder

You have been prescribed treatment with **BCG** (Bacillus Calmette Guerin).

BCG is a drug that was originally developed as a vaccine, but was later discovered to be effective against superficial bladder tumours. It is not a chemotherapy drug. It works in the same way as other vaccines, by stimulating the body's own immune system to fight the tumour. BCG causes an inflammatory response inside the bladder. It is not a chemotherapy drug.

### How is my treatment given?

The course of treatment involves receiving a dose of BCG into your bladder once a week for six weeks. Your appointment dates are at the back of this leaflet.

You will be asked to attend Ward 23 at Leicester General Hospital for approximately three hours once a week for your treatment to be carried out by a nurse.

A catheter will be passed into your bladder. The BCG will then be drained into your bladder through the catheter. The nurse will remove the catheter and ask you to keep the BCG in your bladder. It is recommended that the BCG stays in the bladder for two hours to work effectively. However, some patients will need to pass urine before this time and the nurse will discuss this with you at your appointment.

After two hours, you can pass water as normal.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## Are there any preparations I need to make?

Before you attend for treatment you can eat breakfast as normal, but it is important that you only have one small drink (half a cup) as your bladder needs to be empty and this will help you when holding the BCG in your bladder.

## Are there any side effects I need to be aware of?

The nurse carrying out your treatment will be there to support you and answer any questions you may have regarding your treatments. Your nurse will also provide advice and information on what side effects to expect following your treatment.

The side effects you may experience are as follows:

- debris or blood in your urine
- flu-like symptoms
- tiredness
- discomfort or soreness
- stinging when you pass urine
- urgency or frequency of passing urine
- joint pain

Rare side effects include:

- cough
- rash
- stomach upset or nausea

These symptoms are normal and may last for up to 48 hours after treatment. You may take paracetamol following treatment if it helps relieve some of your symptoms. If you continue to feel unwell after 48 hours and you develop a high temperature or cough, it is vital that you contact us immediately. You may be asked to attend the unit so that you can be assessed by a doctor.

**Do not hesitate to contact the unit if you are unwell. You may be developing an allergic reaction or infection.**

## Is there anything I need to do after treatment?

After each treatment you will need to drink plenty of fluids (approximately two litres or three to four pints) for the first 24 hours in order to flush the BCG out of your bladder. You also need to ensure the following procedures are carried out at home for six hours after treatment:

- wash your hands and genitals after passing urine
- put bleach down the toilet after passing urine and let it stand for 30 minutes before flushing
- flush the toilet twice and then clean the toilet seat with bleach
- do not use creams or emollients on your skin. The absorption of creams and emollients into the skin can be increased by BCG therefore making some creams potentially more harmful.
- You are advised to use condoms during sexual activity to prevent contamination of your partner for

## Is there anything I should tell the nurses?

You need to inform your nurse if:

- **you have recently had, or intend to have, the flu or COVID-19 vaccine. This is because BCG treatment cannot start until two weeks after these vaccines. If you are having these vaccines after treatment, you must wait for two weeks after treatment ends.**
- your medications change or new ones are started during your course of treatment.
- you develop symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI), as you may require antibiotics to clear the infection before your next treatment can continue.

## Appointment dates

The following appointment dates have been arranged for you to attend for bladder instillation therapy.

Please ring the unit if you are unable to attend for any reason.

<b>Week</b>							
<b>Day</b>							
<b>Date</b>							

## What will happen when my course of treatment has finished?

Approximately six to eight weeks after your last treatment you will receive an appointment through the post for you to have a check cystoscopy. This allows us to look inside your bladder and assess how effective your treatment has been.

Your consultant will inform you of any further regular appointments.

**Remember: attending these appointments is important in treating your bladder tumour effectively.**

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact us using the numbers in the leaflet.

**Contact numbers****Bladder Instillation Nurse Specialist  
(for issues related to treatment side effects)**

Monday to Friday 7.30 am - 6.00 pm 0116 258 4191

**Urology Oncology Nurse Specialists (key workers)  
(for more general support relating to cancer)**

Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm 0116 258 4637

**Urology Nurse Specialists**

Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm 0116 258 4635

**Outside these hours**

Urology Emergency Admissions 0116 258 4247 (24 hours, seven days a week)

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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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