

Bladder Cancer: Treatment Questions



Talking with healthcare providers about bladder cancer can be overwhelming. It can be hard to take in all of the information. It helps to be prepared. Make a list of questions and bring them to your appointments. Write the answers down. Make sure you ask how the treatment will change your daily life, including your diet, how you will look and feel after treatment, and how you will pass urine after treatment. Ask how successful the treatment is expected to be, and what the risks and possible side effects are. You may also want to ask a friend or family member to go with you. They can take notes, write down the answers, and also ask questions you may not think of. You can also ask your healthcare provider if you can record the conversation.

Below are some questions you may want to ask.

Deciding on a treatment

- What is the stage and grade of my cancer?
- Has it spread anywhere else in my body?
- What treatment do you think is best for me? Why?
- How much experience do you have treating bladder cancer?
- Should I get a second opinion?
- What are the goals of my treatment? Are we trying to cure the cancer, control it, slow it down, shrink it, or control the symptoms it's causing?
- What's the success rate of this treatment for my type and stage of bladder cancer?
- Will this treatment affect my sex life or my ability to have children after treatment?
- What's the life expectancy for someone with my stage of cancer who gets this treatment?
- How long will I get treatment?
- When will I know if my bladder can be saved? How will I urinate after treatment?
- When do I need to start treatment?
- Will I be able to go to work and be around my family?
- Are there any clinical trials I should look into?
- Will my insurance pay for treatment?
- How much will I have to pay?

Getting ready for treatment

- Should I change my diet? What foods can't I eat?
- How long will each treatment take?
- Where do I have to go for the treatment?
- Who is involved in giving me the treatment?

- Will I be able to drive myself or take public transportation to treatment?
- Does someone need to go with me to treatments?
- Can I take my other medicines during the treatment period?
- Do you have someone on staff who can help me with transportation, finances, and other resources?

Coping during treatment

- What side effects should I watch for?
- How long will side effects last?
- Are there side effects that I need to call you about?
- How do I reach you after hours and on holidays and weekends?
- What can I do to ease the side effects?
- How will we know if treatment is working?
- Are there support groups nearby or online that I can join?

After treatment

- How will I feel after treatment?
- Do I have to limit what I do?
- What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?
- How will we know if treatment worked?
- What should I do to keep the cancer from coming back?
- What changes should I watch for and tell you about?

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