



PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR BCG THERAPY/INTRAVESICAL CHEMOTHERAPY

How does BCG/chemotherapy work?

-BCG is a vaccine that activates your own immune system to target and fight the cancer cells in the bladder. Chemotherapy causes DNA damage to residual microscopic cancer cells and incipient tumors.

-It has been shown in clinical studies to reduce the rate of the bladder cancer coming back as well as reducing the chance that it progresses to a more invasive form of the disease

How is BCG/chemotherapy given?

-The therapy is begun 3-4 weeks after your surgery. Choice of medication is based on tumor features.

-It is administered in the Urology clinic through a Foley catheter inserted into the urethra/bladder

What to Expect on the Day of Treatment

***Please do not eat or drink anything in the morning prior to coming for your therapy.** The urine your body produces can have a diluting effect on the treatment. If your appointment is in the afternoon, then no liquids 6hr prior to treatment. You may eat light breakfast, but avoid caffeinated and carbonated beverages in the morning prior to treatment. Avoid taking diuretic medications until after the treatment.

-When you arrive you will have your temperature taken to make sure you do not have a fever

-You will be asked to give a urine sample, which will be examined for evidence of visible blood/infection

-A member of the clinical staff will place a Foley catheter into the urethra for instillation of the medication into the bladder. Any residual urine will be noted. If the urine is grossly bloody or the catheter insertion is traumatic, then the therapy is best delayed for one week.

-After the first instillation, you should remain in the clinic for observation to ensure no adverse effects.

-After the BCG/chemo is instilled, you should retain the medication for 2 hours prior to urinating.

-Although some centers have described positional maneuvers to distribute the BCG/chemo throughout the bladder, recent evidence suggests that this is not necessary

-If you have issues during treatment & need RN assistance, please call Clinic front desk at 202-795-2802)

-After 2 hours, when you are ready to urinate, do not use a public toilet. Consider sitting down to void to minimize splashing and add 1/2 cup of bleach to the toilet and void into it. Do this with each void over the next 24 hours. Then clean the toilet with bleach: 1-2 cups undiluted bleach, let sit for 15 minutes and then flush. Do not let anyone else use this toilet during this 24hr period of time.

-Be sure to wash your hands and genitals carefully after each void

-If you have urinary leakage, wash the clothes immediately in hot water without other clothes. If you soil an absorbent pad, then pour bleach on the pad, allow to soak in, place in plastic bag, and discard in the trash.

-Please refrain from sexual activity for 48 hours after your BCG/chemo treatment; wear a condom with intercourse throughout the entire treatment course.

Treatment Duration

- The “induction phase” of the treatment consists of 6 weekly instillations for 6 weeks.
- You will then have a cystoscopy performed in the office 6 weeks after the last treatment to evaluate the treatment effectiveness
- If there is any evidence that the tumors have come back, then the “induction phase” may be repeated
- If there is no evidence that the tumors have come back, you will enter into the “maintenance phase”
- “Maintenance phase” consists of cystoscopy at months 3, 6, & 12, each followed by 3 weekly instillations of BCG. If you have high risk disease, then maintenance may continue into months 18, 24, 30, & 36.

Treatment Side Effects

- Side Effects include urinary frequency, urgency, incontinence, fatigue, flu-like symptoms, fever, urinary tract infection, and rare risk of sepsis requiring hospitalization in <0.5%
- To manage your urinary symptoms avoid caffeinated beverages (coffee, soda, black or green tea), carbonated beverages, spicy food, and acidic food (i.e. citrus, vinegar, starches) and to drink water only

Medications to Reduce Symptoms

- Pyridium (phenazopyridine) is a tablet taken by mouth that acts as a topical anesthetic in the urine and turns the urine orange. It may be taken AFTER the medication is given to reduce urinary burning. Please do not take this medication the same day before the instillation, as it will appear on office testing that you have a urinary infection.
- Overactive bladder medications (i.e. mirabegron, oxybutynin, or solifenacin) to reduce the strength and frequency of bladder contractions during your treatment. It is important to stay hydrated (at least 6 bottles of water per day), increase fiber intake, and consider adding probiotic yogurt to your diet given the risk of constipation with the overactive bladder medications. Dry mouth may be managed with gum chewing and oral hydration. This medication may be taken continuously, or just the day before, day of, and day after the instillation to reduce symptoms.
- Sodium Bicarbonate (NaHCO₃): Enhances the delivery of bladder chemo. 2 pills should be taken the night before and 2 pills taken the morning of the instillation if you are receiving chemotherapy (but not for BCG)
- If you experience flu-like symptoms, you should take your temperature. If temperature is <101°F, you may take Tylenol or Ibuprofen as needed. If the temperature persists for more than 48-72 hours then please call the office and ask to speak to the covering provider on call.
- *If you have a fever >101.5°F, then please call the office and ask to speak with the covering provider on call. This may be a sign of a more serious infection that needs prompt medical attention. If you are unable to contact our office, then please go to the Emergency Room for evaluation.

Additional Questions or Concerns?

Please contact our office to discuss in person: 202-741-3121; or email Dr. Whalen: mwhalen@mfa.gwu.edu