

# Immunotherapy and Bladder Cancer: Questions to Ask Your Doctor

*Urology Care*  
FOUNDATION™

*The Official Foundation of the  
American Urological Association*

## WHAT IS IMMUNOTHERAPY AND HOW CAN IT HELP ME WITH MY BLADDER CANCER?

Our immune system helps us to fight things in our body that does not belong there and that can harm us. We know that cancer should not be in our body. But sometimes our immune system cannot see cancer cells as foreign matter because the cancer is hiding. Immunotherapies work with our immune system to reach cancer cells, even those that are hiding.

Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) immunotherapy has been around for over 40 years. It is a drug which your doctor puts straight into the bladder using a small tube. BCG mostly works well for cancers that have not spread outside of the bladder.

Two other types of immunotherapy drugs are now available for bladder cancer. They are called immune checkpoint inhibitors, and you get them through your vein (infusion). These drugs are often for cancers that have spread outside of the bladder or cancers that return after chemotherapy. Your doctor can give you more facts about them.

## CAN IMMUNOTHERAPY HELP MY BLADDER CANCER?

Whether you have had surgery to remove cancer from your bladder or have had your whole bladder removed or have had chemotherapy but your cancer came back or spread, immunotherapy may be a good choice for you now.

Set up a visit with your urologist to learn more about possible immunotherapy treatments for you.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- Has my cancer spread? If so, how far?
- What treatment choices do I have at this stage?
- Can you tell me about the immunotherapy drugs available for bladder cancer?
- How do these immunotherapy drugs work?
- Is there an immunotherapy drug you would suggest for me?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT TREATMENT

- If I had chemotherapy before, can immunotherapy still work for me?
- My cancer came back after BCG therapy. Do you think these other immunotherapy drugs could work for me?
- Are there health issues I have that may prevent my getting immunotherapy?
- Are there any tests that I will have to do before treatment?
- What side effects will I have from this treatment?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER TREATMENT

- What are my chances of a cure with immunotherapy?
- If I have immunotherapy and my cancer goes away, will I need added tests?
- If immunotherapy doesn't work, what else I can do?
- Are there healthy living tips that will help with my healing?

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## ABOUT THE UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions** or go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

## DISCLAIMER:

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

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For copies of printed materials about Bladder Cancer and other urologic conditions, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Order** or call 800-828-7866.

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