

# Mitomycin Treatment

An information guide



# Mitomycin Treatment

After reading this leaflet we hope you and your family will have a greater understanding about intra-vesical chemotherapy as a treatment for superficial bladder cancer. If you have any questions please feel free to ask a nurse to explain further at any time.

## Mitomycin C

This is a drug used in the treatment of superficial bladder cancer. It works by bathing the inside wall of the bladder and producing a chemical cystitis. This is a type of inflammation, which slows down the re-growth of abnormal cells in the bladder wall.

## Why do I need this treatment?

You have recently been investigated for bladder problems and you have been found to have some tumour(s) in your bladder.

Your body is made up of tiny “building blocks” called cells. Under normal circumstances these cells are reproduced to replace dead cells and repair damage to others in a controlled way. Sometimes these cells carry on reproducing and more cells are made than what die, consequently developing a lump.

This lump is called a tumour.

Tumours can be classified as benign or malignant. Benign tumours will not normally cause too much trouble. However, malignant (cancerous) tumours will continue to grow and spread to other parts of the body if they are not treated.

You have a tumour/tumours, which are referred to as bladder cancer. Tumours sit on the inner most lining of the bladder and if left untreated, may affect others layers of the bladder wall.

## **What are the alternatives?**

The alternatives to this treatment are:

- Repeated cystoscopy – with biopsy and electrical or laser cauterisation of any tumours found.
- Intravesical immunotherapy – instillation of BCG (an inactivated strain of tuberculosis bacteria) into the bladder.
- Surgical removal of the bladder (radical cystectomy) - with urinary diversion or bladder reconstruction.

## **What are the benefits?**

By having this treatment it will reduce the risk of recurrence of the disease and the chances of it spreading

## **Prior to the treatment?**

Please limit the amount of fluids you drink before the procedure. This is to ensure the drug is not weakened and remains in your bladder for the prescribed time. If you are taking any diuretic medication please do not take these on the morning of your treatment. They may be taken later on in the day.

## How is the treatment given?

- You will be asked to attend for your treatment weekly depending on your doctor's recommendations. It is very important that the treatment is continuous, so if you cannot attend for any reason please let us know immediately.
- On arrival you will be asked to pass urine, which will then be tested for any infection. If you are found to have a urine infection your treatment for that day will be omitted and a prescription of antibiotics will be arranged via your GP if required.
- Then, you will be taken into a private area and asked to remove all clothing from the waist down and lie down on a couch.
- A catheter (a very fine tube) will be inserted into your bladder to drain any remaining urine from your bladder.
- The drug is given via the catheter directly into the bladder. The catheter is then removed.
- You will be asked not to pass urine for 1 hour in order to keep the solution in contact with your bladder for the necessary period of time.
- Moving around during this time is encouraged.
- Then you will be allowed to empty your bladder as normal (men will be asked to sit down to pass urine to prevent any splashing on the skin).
- For your first treatment you will be asked to remain in the department to pass urine so you can be monitored for any adverse effects, however after your subsequent treatments you will be able to go straight home and pass urine via your own toilet.

## **What are the side effects?**

This treatment is generally well tolerated by most patients but there can be mild side effects due to irritation of the bladder. After each treatment it is possible that you could notice:

- Discomfort on passing urine
- Frequency in passing urine
- Blood in the urine
- Discolouration of the urine
- Urinary tract infection

These side effects are not unusual and should not cause you undue concern. If you are experiencing any of them, try to increase the amount of fluid you are drinking. However, you may want to reduce this again after 7pm so as not to disturb your sleep.

Very rarely, you may notice a rash on the soles of your feet, the palms of your hands and/or on the trunk of your body for a couple of days after the treatment, which can be irritating but is nothing to worry about.

However, if your symptoms do not improve after 2 to 3 days or you are worried, then please contact your Urology Nurse Specialist or GP for advice.

## **Following the treatment**

You will be sent an appointment in 8 to 12 weeks upon completion of your treatment. This is so that your doctor can check your bladder with a telescope (Cystoscopy).

## **Some questions answered**

### **Can I have a normal sex life whilst having this treatment?**

Yes, but we do advise that condoms are used.

### **Will my hair fall out/feel sick/lose/increase weight?**

No. We expect only the side effects mentioned above.

### **Any further questions?**

Then contact the relevant Urology Nurse Specialists at your hospital. Please ring the relevant hospital and asked to be put through.



**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

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