



# BCG Treatment for Bladder Cancer

## What is BCG?

Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) is a medication used to treat a type of early-stage bladder cancer.

## How does it work?

BCG is a type of immunotherapy. It works by stimulating your body's immune system to attack and destroy cancer cells in the bladder.

The treatment is usually done in an outpatient clinic setting, meaning you won't need to stay overnight in the hospital. The number of treatments you need and how often they are given will depend on your specific case and will be determined by your doctor. Typically, BCG treatment begins with an induction course (once weekly for 6 weeks) followed by maintenance therapy (usually once weekly for 3 weeks, every 3-6 months, for 1-3 years).



## Before Instillation

- Stop drinking fluids at least 4 hours before you receive your treatment to prevent the BCG from being diluted. You can eat normally. If you normally take water tablets (diuretics) either take them after your BCG treatment is completed or at least 6 hours before your treatment.
- We will ask for a urine sample before every instillation. Empty your bladder completely.
- Inform your doctor if you have felt feverish, tired or had chills since your last treatment or if you have been urinating any bright red blood before your instillation.

## During Instillation

- BCG is instilled (placed) directly into your bladder through a thin tube called a catheter and only takes a few minutes.
- You will be asked to hold the BCG in your bladder for **2 hours** after each instillation.
- You may be positioned from side to side and back to front every 15 minutes while the medication is in your bladder to make sure the BCG completely covers the inside of your bladder.

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## After Instillation

- **Sit** down on the toilet to urinate to avoid splashing and **flush** the toilet **twice** to safely dispose of BCG in your urine.
- After urinating for the first time after the BCG treatment, add two (2) cups of chlorine bleach to the toilet, close the lid and wait 15 minutes before flushing.
- Wash your genital area and hands carefully with soap each time you urinate.
- Drink plenty of fluids to wash out your bladder for at least six (6) hours after the BCG treatment.

## Possible temporary side effects of BCG

- Urinary urgency and burning sensation when urinating
- Blood in the urine
- Frequent urination
- Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, fatigue, and chills
- Lower urinary tract infections (UTIs)

These side effects are usually mild and go away on their own within a few days. However, it is important to tell your doctor if you experience any severe or persistent side effects.

## Important information to know about BCG

- BCG is not effective for everyone.
- BCG is not a cure for bladder cancer, but it can help reduce the risk of the cancer coming back or progressing after it has been removed.
- It is important to follow your doctor's instructions carefully during and after BCG treatment.
- Be sure to tell your doctor about all the medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications and herbal supplements, before starting BCG treatment.
- BCG can weaken your immune system. This means you may be more susceptible to infections during treatment. Tell your doctor right away if you experience any signs of infection, such as fever, chills, or unusual pain.
- BCG is not recommended for certain people. This includes individuals with weakened immune systems, pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions. Your doctor will discuss your individual situation and determine if BCG is right for you.

It is important to discuss any questions or concerns you have about BCG treatment with your doctor.

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