

INTRAVESICAL CHEMOTHERAPY; Your treatment guide to Mitomycin C or Epirubicin Instillation

What is Intravesical Chemotherapy?

Non- invasive bladder cancers are an early form of cancer but without treatment, many will recur after initial removal.

Intravesical chemotherapy is given to people who have had several non-invasive bladder cancers. It is given by filling the bladder with medication to fight the cancer cells.

The aim of intravesical chemotherapy is to reduce the likelihood of a further tumour growing or to lengthen the time until recurrence.

There are two commonly used drugs given into the bladder, namely Mitomycin C and Epirubicin. This leaflet will tell you briefly what you can expect to happen when you attend for your treatment.

Where is treatment given?

All chemotherapy is given in a private area on the Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre. You can expect to be here no longer than 2 hours. Treatment is given weekly for 5-6 weeks.

What does it involve?

You will be asked to remove your lower garments and lie on a couch. A small catheter will be passed into your bladder with the help of some anaesthetic gel.

The Mitomycin C or Epirubicin is then introduced into your bladder through the catheter. The catheter will then be removed and you will be asked to hold the drug in your bladder for 1 hour. After 1 hour you can empty your bladder. You are advised to wash your hands and genital area immediately afterwards.

Are there any side effects?

There are some side effects which vary from person to person. You will probably not have all of these effects, but they include pain on passing urine, frequency and sometimes an urgent need to pass urine and sometimes a small amount of blood in the urine. If your side effects are very difficult, or you develop a urine infection, we may need to delay a treatment. Occasionally patients develop a skin rash and their treatment has to be stopped.

Bladder chemotherapy does NOT cause side effects such as hair loss, nausea and vomiting sometimes associated with other methods of receiving chemotherapy.

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How can you help yourself?

Most patients take it easy on the day of their treatment but then return to normal activity soon after.

You should drink plenty of fluids, which will help relieve any side effects.

If you have any problems or queries related to your intravesical chemotherapy, please ring either:

Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre on 01423 557301

(Mon – Fri 9am – 6pm)

The Macmillan Urology Nurse Specialists on 01423 553317 or 01423 553318
(Mon – Fri 9am-5pm)

Your GP

Should you wish to read more about non-invasive bladder cancer and its treatment, Macmillan Cancer Support's booklet 'Understanding Non-Invasive Bladder Cancer' is a good place to start. This can be obtained free of charge by ringing 0808 808 00 00.

Macmillan cancer Support can also be accessed on-line. Their web address is www.macmillan.org.uk.

If you or your family (with your approval) would like to discuss your treatment further or have any questions, please contact:

Alison Marchant or Helen Sunderland Macmillan Urology Nurse Specialists on 01423 553317 or 01423 553318

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.