Bladder Cancer Survivorship

Recurrence and follow up for non muscle invasive bladder cancer
Bladder Cancer Facts

- More than 70,000 new cases each year
- 4th most common cancer in men
- 9th most common cancer in women
- In USA today there are more than 500,000 bladder cancer survivors.
- Risks: Cigarette smoking and exposure to chemicals.
Recurrence Facts for Non-Muscle Invasive Bladder Cancer

- Bladder cancer is a very treatable disease but has a very high recurrence rate.
- The recurrence rate can be up to 80%
- The recurrence rate is related to the grade, size and number of tumors and history of the disease
- High grade, multiple or large tumors are more likely to recur.
Recurrence Facts Continued

- Recurrence is more common in the first 12-24 months after diagnoses but can appear many years later.

- Strongest prognostic factor for recurrence is the result of the FIRST cystoscopy done about 3 months after the TURBT.
Treatments to Decrease the Recurrence Rates

- Chemotherapy are often given immediately after the first tumor resection and can decrease recurrence rates by 20%.
- BCG (immunotherapy) and chemotherapy are often given once a week for 6 weeks.
- For maintenance or “booster” therapy BCG is given weekly for a period of 3 weeks.
- Schedules for these treatments vary greatly between physicians.
Consequences of High Recurrence Rates.

- Extremely important to adhere to life-long surveillance
- A traditional schedule for surveillance can be:
  - Cystoscopy every 3 months for 2 years
  - Cystoscopy every 6 months for 2 years
  - Cystoscopy every 1 year for life

Schedules can vary among physicians, however all agree on cystoscopy at 3 months after TURBT and lifelong surveillance.
Emotional Consequences from High Recurrence Rates

- Fear of recurrence
- Grieving due to loss of health
- Guilt: “If only I never smoked”
- Anger: “I never smoked and have lived healthy, it is not fair”
- Fear of painful procedures for a lifetime
What can the Bladder Cancer Survivor do to Live a Happy and Healthy Life After Diagnosis

- If possible find a provider that you trust and have faith in
- Educate yourself: Find out the grade, the size and multiplicity of the tumors.
- Utilize resources such as BCAN
- Join a local support group
- Talk to your provider, nurse or social worker
Support & Education

- Seek support from family and friends
- Quit smoking to reduce risk of recurrence of bladder cancer and reduce the risk of developing other cancers and diseases related to smoking
- Eat healthy: some studies have shown that fruit and vegetables will decrease the risk of recurrence
- Continue to engage in work, hobbies and fun activities
Summary

Remember that the follow up surveillance and maintenance therapies are crucial for your survivorship.