



What You Should Know About Non-Muscle Invasive Bladder Cancer (NMIBC) that Returns after BCG Treatment

What does it mean to have NMIBC return after BCG Treatment?

NMIBC is a cancer that grows on the lining of the bladder. This type of cancer does not grow into the deeper muscle layer of the bladder. It is often treated with BCG, a medicine that is instilled directly into the bladder. This treatment is given once a week for several weeks in your doctor's office. If the cancer returns after BCG treatment, the risk of the cancer spreading can increase. New treatment options must then be considered. Your doctor might call this BCG "unresponsive" or BCG "refractory" NMIBC.

What are some of the treatment options when NMIBC returns after BCG Treatment?

There are many ways to treat bladder cancer that returns after BCG. Treatment options depend on your health, medicine tolerance, lifestyle, and type of disease. Treatment options may include:

NON-SURGICAL TREATMENTS

- **Intravesical Treatments**
 - BCG
 - Chemotherapy
- **Systemic Immunotherapy**
- **Chemoradiation**

SURGICAL TREATMENT

- **Radical Cystectomy, which includes:**
 - Removal of the bladder
 - Removal of the prostate in some men
 - Removal of the uterus, ovaries, and part of the vagina in some women
 - Removal of lymph nodes in the pelvis
 - Construction of a reservoir to contain urine, using the bowel

NON-SURGICAL TREATMENTS

➤ **Intravesical treatments** are medicines instilled into the bladder. Two types of intravesical treatments you might consider are intravesical BCG and intravesical chemotherapy.

- **BCG** is a form of immunotherapy instilled into the bladder. Some patients choose to have another course of BCG that may be combined with another agent such as interferon.
- **Chemotherapy** involves instilling drugs such as Gemcitabine and Docetaxel or others into the bladder, typically given once weekly for 6 weeks.



➤ **Systemic immunotherapy using a drug such as Pembrolizumab**, involves delivering the medicine through an IV. It is approved for treating carcinoma in situ (CIS). It may be an option for patients for whom bladder removal is not possible or desired.



➤ **Chemoradiation** is a treatment that is still being investigated. This treatment uses radiation, with or without chemotherapy, to treat NMIBC.



SURGICAL TREATMENT

➤ **Radical cystectomy** is a surgical treatment. It is the treatment most likely to cure you of bladder cancer. It includes:

- Removal of the bladder
- Removal of the prostate in some men
- Removal of the uterus, ovaries, and part of the vagina in some women
- Removal of lymph nodes in the pelvis
- Construction of a reservoir to contain urine, using the bowel



How does a patient choose the best treatment if bladder cancer returns?

It can be hard to choose between different treatments. There are no studies that have directly compared treatment options. Talk with your doctor to understand the benefits and risks of each treatment option you have.

It can also be helpful to hear stories from patients who had bladder cancer that returned after BCG. You can do that at this free link: <https://bcan.org/decision-making-webinar>.

Are there clinical trials available for NMIBC that returns after BCG?

Some hospitals participate in clinical trials for NMIBC that returns after BCG. One study, called CISTO (Comparison of Intravesical Therapy and Surgery), was designed by patients and for patients to compare treatments when NMIBC returns after BCG treatment. BCG refractory patients are eligible to enroll in CISTO.

In this study, patients answer surveys about their experience with the treatment they choose. Participating helps future patients who face the same decision about choosing between treatment options.



Questions to ask your doctor

To get the most from the visit with your doctor, you might want to review these questions and take them with you.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

What stage, grade, and histologic subtype of NMIBC do I have?

What is the chance that my bladder cancer will progress to muscle invasive?

What are my treatment options?

What side effects may occur from the treatment options?

How will you test whether the cancer returns after treatment?

Are there resources, such as support groups, counseling, or online services, that can help me through this?

What treatment options does my insurance cover?

Am I eligible for any clinical trials?

Write your own questions here:

More resources

The Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network supports people touched by bladder cancer. It is a community of patients, caregivers, survivors, advocates, nurses, doctors, and researchers. Free information is provided on www.bcan.org. BCAN can match you with a bladder cancer survivor who has experience with what you are going through. You can call 301-215-9099, ext. 212 or email info@bcan.org to be matched with a survivor volunteer. All information is confidential.

