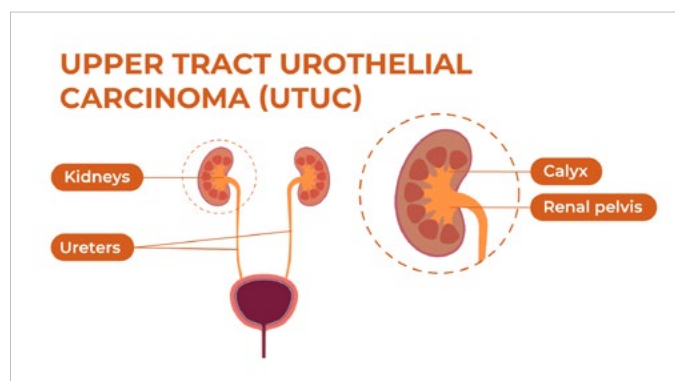


## What is UTUC?

Most bladder cancers (about 90–95%) begin in the **urothelial cells**, which line the inside of the bladder and other parts of the urinary tract. When these cells grow out of control, it's called **urothelial carcinoma**.

If the cancer starts in the lining of the **kidney** (in areas called the **renal pelvis** or **calyx**) or in the **ureters** (the tubes that connect the kidneys to the bladder), it is known as **upper tract urothelial carcinoma (UTUC)**.



Some people with UTUC have no symptoms, and the cancer is only found when their doctor is checking for other health issues with X-rays or scans.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



Common signs of UTUC may include:

- **Blood in the urine:** Seeing blood in the urine (also called hematuria) is one of the most noticeable signs of UTUC.

- **Changes in urination:** This can include needing to go to the bathroom more often, feeling a strong need to go, pain or burning during urination, or difficulty urinating.
- **Flank or back pain:** Pain in the side or back may be a sign that the cancer has grown and is affecting the kidney or nearby areas.

## ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

- *What can I expect, based on my stage and grade of UTUC?*
- *What is the success rate for the treatment you're suggesting?*
- *How will you know if the treatment is working?*
- *Will I need surgery, and if so, what kind of surgery?*
- *How can I manage side effects and keep up my quality of life during treatment?*
- *Can I continue my regular activities and work during treatment?*

## TERMS TO KNOW

- **Calyx:** Part of the kidney where urine collects before flowing to the renal pelvis.
- **Cystoscopy:** A test using a thin, lighted tube (cystoscope) to look at the bladder and urethra.
- **Endoscopy:** A thin tube with a camera and tools that enters through the urethra to see inside the urinary tract.
- **Kidney:** Organs that filter blood to make urine.
- **Renal Pelvis:** Area in the kidney that collects urine before it flows into the ureter.
- **Ureter:** The tube carrying urine from the kidney to the bladder.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: How is UTUC treated?

Your doctor may conduct tests that could include procedures such as **cystoscopy** and utereroscopy, and an imaging test such as a CT scan. Treatment options for UTUC depend on the stage and grade (low or high) of the cancer and individual factors.

### Treatment options for low-grade UTUC may include:

- Intracavitary chemotherapy medication (placed directly where the tumor is located, in the renal pelvis and/or calyces or the ureters) to kill cancer cells, which can be used before or after surgery.
- Sometimes, smaller UTUC tumors can be removed using **endoscopy**. This is a less invasive form of surgery.

### Treatment options for high-grade UTUC may include:

- Systemic (throughout your body) chemotherapy medications to kill cancer cells. This can be used before or after surgery to shrink the tumor, prevent it from spreading, or treat cancer that has spread to other parts of the body.
- Surgery can remove the area where a tumor is in the kidney (a partial nephrectomy) or the entire kidney and ureter (a radical nephroureterectomy or RNU).
- Radiation therapy using high energy rays can be used if surgery is not an option or to treat cancer that has spread.
- Immunotherapy and targeted therapies can boost the body's immune system to help it fight cancer cells. If you are diagnosed with UTUC, speak with your doctor about your best treatment options. A genetic analysis of the tumor may be used to assess if the specific genetic mutations that a therapy can effectively target are present.

## NEXT STEPS

- It can be helpful to talk to someone who has experience with UTUC. Call the BCAN Survivor to Survivor program at 1-888-901-2226 to connect with a volunteer who has experience with this diagnosis.



< Scan this QR code to learn more about upper tract urothelial carcinoma

## The Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN)

*BCAN's mission is to increase public awareness about bladder cancer, advance bladder cancer research, and provide educational and support services for the bladder cancer community.*



888-901-BCAN (2226)



[info@bcan.org](mailto:info@bcan.org)