BCG Immunotherapy Treatment
Disclaimer
This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified health-care provider. Please consult your health-care provider who will be able to determine if this information is appropriate for your specific situation.
**What is BCG?**

BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin) is a special medication used in the treatment of bladder cancer. It is a live bacteria originally developed for the treatment of TB, but reduced in strength for bladder cancer treatments. The medication is instilled in the bladder via a urinary catheter and once in contact with the cancer stimulates a reaction to kill the cancer cells.

The treatments are once a week for six weeks and are done in the Urology Clinic at the Civic Campus or the Medical Day Care Units at the Riverside and General Campus of The Ottawa Hospital. You will be asked not to urinate for two hours after the treatment. You will be able to get dressed and go home. You must remain in the unit for 30 minutes after the first treatment, but after all other treatments you may leave once the treatment is completed.

**Before your treatment**

- Limit your fluid intake for four hours prior to the treatment. Recommendations are no more than one cup (250 ml) of fluid.
• If you take diuretic medication, this should not be taken until two hours after your treatment.
• Urinate just prior to your treatment.
• Inform the nurse or doctor if:
  – You are pregnant
  – You have a suppressed immune system
  – You have a bladder infection
  – You have had a heart valve replacement, pacemaker or orthopedic hardware inserted.
  – You are bleeding or have a fever.

The treatment

• A nurse will catheterize your bladder using a small urinary catheter. The catheter will be advanced through your urethra, into the bladder and drain any urine left in your bladder prior to the instillation of the BCG.
• The medication is administered using the same catheter and takes only a few minutes, and the catheter is removed once all the medication is in.
• You will be asked to hold the medication in your bladder and not to urinate for two hours after the instillation. The BCG is most effective if kept in contact with the bladder. It is not necessary to lie down after the procedure, walking or sitting will allow the medication to coat the bladder. You can get up and get dressed.
• You must remain in the unit for 30 minutes after your initial treatment, with subsequent treatments you may go home.

After your treatment

• After two hours, the end of the treatment period, you should urinate to expel the fluid. It is important not to splash urine, you must sit on the toilet to urinate. Try to avoid public facilities.
• Contact with the urine on your skin should be avoided for six hours after your treatment. If splashing occurs wash with soap and water to prevent irritation.

• If urine is splashed on any surface for example the toilet seat, the surface should be cleaned with bleach. This can be done by pouring a small amount of bleach on a cloth to clean the surface.

• For safety reasons, after voiding add two cups of liquid household bleach to the toilet bowl and let it stand for fifteen minutes before flushing. Repeat this procedure after each voiding for six hours after your treatment.

• Drink plenty of fluids especially during the first few hours after treatment to wash out the bladder. Increase your fluid intake for the week after each treatment EXCEPT the morning of your treatment.

• Some patients may experience a burning sensation the first time they urinate after the treatment. Increasing your fluid intake can reduce this effect.

What are the side effects?

This treatment is usually well tolerated and most patients have little or no side effects.

The following side effects are most common:
• Increased frequency of urination
• Frequent urge to urinate
• Painful urination
• Mild chills, muscle aches and feeling tired
• Nausea,

* If any of these persist or worsen after 24 to 48 hours call your doctor or seek medical attention.
* If bleeding persists, your doctor should be informed because your next treatment may be postponed.

Less common, but serious side effects:

- Fever
- Severe chills, shaking
- Joint pain
- Vomiting
- Severe fatigue
- Cough
- Skin rash
- Headache, dizziness
- Fever of 38.5 ° or greater report to your doctor—a fever may not be caused by your instillation, but could mean you have an infection. You should seek medical advice or go to emergency.

Tell your doctor or nurse about any side effects you think are caused by your treatment, even if they are not on the above lists.

**Restrictions**

- Avoid sexual intercourse for 24 hours after your treatment.
- You should be able to engage in any other activities after your treatment, **such as driving a car**.

* Listen to your body and if you feel tired during any activity, adjust activity schedule to include rest periods.

**REMEMBER:** If you are experiencing severe side effects and cannot reach a doctor, go to your nearest emergency room.
Do you have any questions? Please write them down here and ask the doctor or nurse on your next visit.