

Diagnosing Bladder Cancer

A Quick Guide

Contents

This is a brief summary on 'Diagnosing bladder cancer' from our website. You will find more detailed information on there. In this information there are sections on

- Bladder cancer tests
- Further tests for bladder cancer
- What to ask your doctor about bladder cancer tests

You can view this information in a larger print on our website.

Bladder cancer tests

Most people begin by seeing their GP. Your GP will ask about your general health and examine you. You may have to give a urine sample, which will be sent away for testing. Your GP may want to examine you internally, to check other nearby organs. To do this they will put a gloved finger into your rectum (back passage) or vagina to see if everything feels normal.

At the hospital

The specialist will ask about your medical history and symptoms. He or she will examine you. And you may have to give another urine sample. Your doctor will then arrange for you to have a cystoscopy.

Cystoscopy

This is the most important test for diagnosing bladder cancer. The doctor puts a thin tube with a light on the end inside your bladder. The tube has fibre optic cables inside it. This lets the doctor see inside your bladder. You can have this with a local anaesthetic.

If your doctor sees anything abnormal, they will want to take tissue samples. For this you will need another cystoscopy, this time under general anaesthetic. While you are under a general anaesthetic, the doctor will examine your bladder, take tissue samples (biopsies) and snip off any small growths. You can usually go home the same day.

Other tests

You may have

- An ultrasound of the urinary tract
- An X-ray of the whole urinary system called an intravenous urogram
- A CT scan of the urinary system called a CT urogram

Further tests for bladder cancer

If tests show you have bladder cancer, your specialist will ask you to have further tests at the hospital.

Intravenous urogram

This is an X-ray to look at the whole of your urinary system, to make sure the rest of it is healthy. It is sometimes called an IVU or IVP.

CT scan of the urinary tract

You may have a special computerised tomography (CT) scan called a CT urogram. This creates three-dimensional pictures that show the whole urinary system.

Tests if you have invasive bladder cancer

If your cancer has grown into the bladder wall (invasive bladder cancer), your specialist may ask you to have a scan. This is to see whether the cancer has spread to another part of your body. You may have a CT scan, and you may have an MRI scan, a bone scan, an ultrasound scan or a PET scan.

After the tests

You may feel very anxious while you are waiting for the test results. It may help to talk to a close friend, a relative or your specialist nurse about how you feel. Or you may want to contact a cancer support group to talk to someone who has been through a similar experience.

What to ask your doctor about bladder cancer tests

- What tests do I need to have?
- What are you looking for?
- Will the tests show whether I have cancer?
- Will you know what treatment I need when you have the results?
- Are any of the tests painful?
- Do any of the tests have after effects?
- Can I have my tests as an out patient?
- Can I bring someone with me when I have the tests?
- How long will the results take?
- Who will give me the test results?

For more information, visit our website <http://www.cruk.org/about-cancer>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. Our information is based on the best current scientific evidence and reviewed regularly by leading clinicians and experts in health and social care.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on 0808 800 4040 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday.

Adapted from Cancer Research UK's website in September 2015. Cancer Research UK's website is not designed to provide medical advice or professional services and is intended to be for educational use only. The information provided through Cancer Research UK's website and our nurse team is not a substitute for professional care and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. If you have, or suspect you may have, a health problem you should consult your doctor. Copyright Cancer Research UK 2015. Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666) and in the Isle of Man (1103)