



Mitomycin therapy for the treatment of superficial bladder tumours

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Introduction

Your urologist has prescribed mitomycin chemotherapy for the treatment of your bladder tumours. The treatment helps to reduce the number of recurrences of your tumours. This booklet has been written to help you understand the treatment and for you to use as a reference in the future.

What is cancer?

Our bodies are made of tiny structures called cells, which cannot be seen by the naked eye. Normally these cells reproduce themselves by dividing in a regular and orderly fashion. This enables growth and repair of body tissues. Sometimes these cells start to grow and divide in an abnormal fashion, and this is what happens in cancer.

Cancer is a word used to describe many different diseases, which have many causes, behave very differently and are treated in a variety of ways. In this booklet we will explain how your superficial bladder cancer (NMIBC) will be treated.

What is superficial bladder cancer or also called Non Muscle Invasive Bladder Cancer - (NMIBC)?

You will recently have had an operation called a cystoscopy. During the operation your consultant found an abnormal area which he/she has either taken a sample from (biopsied) or removed.

The results of this have shown that you have superficial bladder cancer (NMIBC). This is a very mild form of cancer. It affects just a few layers of the inner surface of the bladder. It is important to know that the cancer has not grown into the muscle of the bladder, or outside the bladder wall. This means that your cancer is very treatable.

If left alone, superficial bladder cancer (NMIBC) has a chance of recurring. To prevent the likelihood of this happening you have been prescribed a course of mitomycin therapy.

Mitomycin

Mitomycin is a chemotherapy agent prepared in clinic before being administered. It is violet blue in colour. You will have the drug instilled into your bladder once a week for six weeks.

Your appointments will be given to you by the Clinical Nurse Specialist in Urology. She will also explain the treatment to you and answer any questions you may have.

You can eat and drink normally before and after your treatment. You can drive yourself to the hospital and home again or even travel on public transport if you wish.

Your treatment

When you arrive in the department you will be met by the nurse specialist. On your first visit he/she will make sure you understand your treatment.

The nurse will then take you into the treatment room. He/she will ask you to lower your clothes below your waist and lie on your back on the treatment couch.

After the nurse has cleansed the area, they will then insert a small tube called a catheter into your urethra and drain off any urine. The nurse will then insert, through the catheter, the mitomycin therapy into your bladder. The catheter will then be removed.

You will then be able to get off the couch and get dressed.

You then need to hold the treatment in your bladder for one hour. If you live near enough to the hospital you could go home whilst timing your hour. If this is not possible then you

will need to spend that hour in the department. You will then return the following week for your next treatment.

It is normal to see 'bits' or old clots in your urine during the treatment. These are the scabs from your old tumours that have broken away from the bladder wall.

Side effects of mitomycin

Side effects are unusual, but it is important for you to be aware of them if they occur.

If you experience any of them please contact your nurse specialist (number at the back of the booklet).

Report them as they appear – do not wait until your next visit to tell us.

Side effects include:

Skin rash

This resembles a nettle rash. It may occur towards the end of your treatment or even after your treatment has finished. The rash usually occurs on the hands and feet. If this should occur, we would want to see you to be sure it is a rash caused by mitomycin and nothing else. The treatment for this would be some antihistamines to stop any itching of the skin and we would cancel any further mitomycin therapy for you. Your allergy to this drug would be recorded in your hospital notes.

Urine infection

The symptoms of a urine infection are:

- increase in the number of times you pass urine
- burning or stinging when you pass urine
- fever or shivering
- offensive or cloudy urine

If you experience any of these symptoms ring your nurse specialist immediately. He/she will arrange to see you and take a urine sample to be sent to the laboratory. You would probably need a course of antibiotics to clear the infection.

In the case of a urine infection, your treatment will be withheld until the infection has cleared.

Chemical cystitis

This results in an increase in passing urine but is not the result of an infection but more a chemical reaction to the lining of your bladder. If this is a particular problem then we may withhold treatment until your symptoms had settled.

After your treatment has completed

Once you have completed your treatment, we will arrange for your bladder to be checked with the telescope (cystoscopy). Sometimes this is done under local anaesthetic. This is called a flexible cystoscopy. This may be carried out in the Endoscopy department, or your consultant may want to do this under general anaesthetic. You will be informed of which method.

This check is usually performed six weeks after your last treatment so that we can see how your bladder has responded to the treatment.

Occasionally your consultant may want you to continue mitomycin therapy but on a monthly basis. This is called maintenance treatment.

For further information or reporting of any problems relating to your treatment please contact:

Clinical Nurse Specialists in Urology

Direct telephone number: 0121 371 6926

(Answer machine available)



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