



Bladder Cancer: Get Informed, Read, Listen, and Ask





Bladder Cancer



The **most common symptom of bladder cancer is blood in the urine (pee)**¹ which makes it look red, pink or tea-coloured. While blood in your urine is unlikely to be cancer, it is important to get checked by a doctor.



Bladder cancer is **four times more common in men than in women**². Bladder cancer develops most often in people between the ages of 60 and 79, the average age of diagnosis is 73 years old³. But also younger men and women can get bladder cancer.

No one knows what causes most bladder cancer, but some factors may increase your risk of getting it.



You are more likely to get bladder cancer if you have **a history of smoking** or **use chemicals at work** (e.g. if you work with industrial paints or water disinfection chemicals).



Your doctor will ask you about your smoking habits and exposure to other chemicals and will take that into consideration when making a diagnosis.

Blood in the Urine

Doctors call blood in the urine haematuria. There are many reasons why you could have blood in your urine: infection, kidney stones, an enlarged prostate, kidney disease, but also some medication or strenuous exercise can cause haematuria. **The likelihood that it is caused by bladder cancer is less than 10%⁴.**

Sometimes it can be difficult for doctors to decide who may have bladder cancer and who might have a more minor condition. For some symptoms, your doctor may ask you to wait to see if the symptoms get better or respond to treatment, such as antibiotics. Or your doctor may arrange for you to have one or more tests to find out what is causing the blood in your urine.

These tests could be:



Urine Cytology

A sample of urine can be sent to the laboratory to look for cancerous cells under a microscope. This test may detect cancer cells, but only if they are seen. If no cancer cells are seen, it does not mean there is no bladder cancer present. Further tests must be done to confirm, or rule out the diagnosis of bladder cancer.



Cystoscopy

Cystoscopy is an important test to see if there could be cancerous cells in the tissue lining of your bladder.

In a cystoscopy procedure, a doctor or nurse looks into your bladder with a special thin telescope called a cystoscope. The cystoscope is inserted into your bladder via your urethra, the tube through which urine passes when you empty your bladder. A cystoscopy to look into your bladder is normally carried out under local anaesthetic to reduce pain and discomfort.



Non-Invasive Diagnostic Tests

Other diagnostic tests exist which could help the doctor decide if you have cancer or not. These are called 'non-invasive' tests because the tests can be carried out on your urine. These tests usually look for the presence of specific molecules or markers associated with tumour cells. If the markers cannot be found, it is unlikely that you have cancer.

This information can help your doctor decide how best to treat you.

What Happens if I Do Have Bladder Cancer?

Everyone with early bladder cancer has surgery to remove the cancer tissue from their bladder lining. This operation is called trans-urethral removal of bladder tumour (TURBT). This will require anaesthesia and your doctor will explain the procedure in more detail to you.

After surgery, the doctor sends samples (biopsies) of the removed bladder tissue to the laboratory.

There, a specialised doctor (the pathologist) will review the tissues to double-check whether you have bladder cancer or not. If cancer is present, they will also determine the specific type of bladder cancer and assess how aggressive it might be. Based on these results, your doctors will tell you what further treatment you may need.

After Treatment

After any treatment for early bladder cancer, your doctor keeps a close eye on you to make sure the cancer does not come back.

You may have additional cystoscopy procedures for some years to come. How often you have these depends on the kind of bladder cancer you have.

Other non-invasive tests exist which could help the doctor with your follow-up.

These tests require only a small sample of your urine to check for the presence/absence of abnormalities. This information can help your doctor decide if your cancer has come back and what the next steps should be.

CE-IVD. *In Vitro* Diagnostic Medical Device. Not available in all countries. Not available in the United States.

1 National Cancer Institute: Patient Information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bladder-cancer/symptoms/>. Date accessed Jan 2023.

2 Saginala K, et al. Epidemiology of Bladder Cancer. *Medical Sciences*. 2020. Mar 13;8(1):15

3 <https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/bladder-cancer/statistics>. Date accessed Jan 2023.

4 <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/blood-in-urine/basics/causes/con-20032338>. Date accessed Jan 2023.

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

904 Caribbean Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94089 USA

TOLL FREE +1.888.336.2743
PHONE +1.408.541.4191
FAX +1.408.541.4192

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS

Vira Soleih
81470 Maurens-Scopont France

PHONE +33.563.82.53.00
FAX +33.563.82.53.01
EMAIL cepheid@cepheideurope.fr

www.Cepheidinternational.com

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