

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM ABOUT ADVANCED BLADDER CANCER

UNDERSTANDING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: FIRST STEP TOWARD EARLY DETECTION

RECOGNIZE THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS OF BLADDER CANCER.

Many people are unaware of the symptoms of bladder cancer, therefore the diagnosis can often be delayed. Only about half of bladder cancer cases are diagnosed at an early stage.

EARLY DETECTION CAN BE CRITICAL.

The earlier bladder cancer is found and the more information patients can obtain about their type of cancer, the better the chance for successful treatment.

BLADDER CANCER IS NOT AS RARE AS YOU MAY THINK.

In the United States, approximately 81,000 people are diagnosed with some form of bladder cancer each year.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR.

RISK FACTORS:

- Age (9 out of 10 are older than 55)
- Lifestyle/smoking
- Family history
- Arsenic in drinking water
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Workplace exposures (eg, industrial chemicals associated with rubber, leather, textiles, paint products, hair dyes, and printing)
- Race and ethnicity (more common in Caucasians)
- Gender (more common in men than women)
- Chronic bladder irritation and infections
- Personal history of bladder cancer

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- Weak urine stream
- Blood in the urine
- Pain or burning during urination
- More frequent urination
- Feeling tired or weak
- Swelling in feet
- Sense of urgency to urinate, even when the bladder is not full
- Back pain
- Pelvic pain
- Bone pain
- Loss of appetite and weight loss

IF YOU ARE DIAGNOSED WITH ADVANCED BLADDER CANCER, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

You may feel shocked, frightened and overwhelmed, but there are reasons to stay positive. It can be treated. Your medical team can develop a plan to help manage the disease. Keep reading for tips to help guide a discussion with your doctor.

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FOLLOWING A DIAGNOSIS, COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM IS CRITICAL

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR TREATMENT DISCUSSIONS.

Learn as much as you can about bladder cancer. Ask your doctor to explain anything that you do not understand or any aspects that make you uncomfortable.

COMMUNICATE HOW YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION.

For example, you may prefer to talk with your healthcare team by phone call, text message and/or email. Also, learn how your team communicates with each other to ensure all care decisions remain informed and well-coordinated.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR DOCTOR AND MEDICAL TEAM.

Do not feel rushed into making decisions about your care. When we are anxious, we may not process information clearly. Prepare a list of questions to ask your doctor ahead of the appointment. For example:

- What type of bladder cancer do I have?
- What stage of bladder cancer are you diagnosing?
- Do you typically treat bladder cancer patients?
- What are my treatment goals (eg, to remove or control the cancer, or to relieve symptoms)?
- Are there specific tests that may help me identify treatment options most appropriate for my disease?
- Which treatments do you recommend for me and my type of bladder cancer and what are the side effects?
- Are there new or different approaches to treating my specific type of cancer?
- How will I feel during treatment? Will I be able to work?
- Should I seek a second opinion from another specialist regarding my diagnosis and treatment?

DESIGNATE A NOTEBOOK OR BINDER TO COORDINATE APPOINTMENTS.

Track doctors' phone numbers and keep notes on your test results and treatment options. Bring this notebook to each appointment.

BUILD A SUPPORT TEAM OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

Consider taking someone to your appointments to help you remember to ask questions and take notes. You might feel overwhelmed and the ability to remember every detail can become difficult. Friends and family can help in this situation.

INVOLVE YOUR FULL HEALTHCARE TEAM.

Be open and honest with them about your symptoms and treatment side effects. Cancer affects people differently, and no one can predict your individual experience.

KEEP AN OPEN DISCUSSION WITH YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS.

If your treatment is not working, or if you are not tolerating it, ask your healthcare provider about other treatment options or for information about enrolling in clinical trials.