

Patient's name:

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## Your treatment

The treatment schedule below explains how the drug for this treatment is given.

### Intravesical Mycobacterium bovis (Bacillus Calmette and Guerin (BCG) strain)


This treatment cycle is repeated every 7 days. You will have 6 cycles. Your doctor will advise you if further maintenance treatments are required.

Day	Treatment	How it is given	How long it takes
1	BCG	Through a tube (urinary catheter) into your bladder	About 3 or 4 hours

- BCG is a drug that contains live bacteria. The BCG bacteria causes inflammation of your bladder wall which in turn stimulates your immune system to kill cancer cells in the bladder. The drug itself stays in your bladder for two hours and is then drained out through the urinary catheter, or leaves your bladder when you pass urine.
- Before you start this treatment it is important that you tell your doctor or nurse if you have a history of tuberculosis (TB) as the BCG can activate TB.
- You should **not** have BCG therapy within 7 to 14 days of bladder surgery; if you have blood in your urine, have a urinary tract infection or are on antibiotics.
- Tell your doctor if you have had any joint replacements, artificial grafts or devices such as heart valves.

## When to get help

This treatment can sometimes cause serious problems. It is important to get medical help immediately if you become unwell.

 <p><b>IMMEDIATELY go to your nearest hospital Emergency Department, or contact your doctor or nurse if you have any of the following at any time:</b></p>	<p><b>Emergency contact details</b></p> <p>Ask your doctor or nurse from your treating team who to contact if you have a problem</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a temperature of 38°C or higher</li> <li>• chills, sweats, shivers or shakes</li> <li>• cannot pass urine</li> <li>• shortness of breath</li> <li>• uncontrolled vomiting or diarrhoea</li> <li>• pain, tingling or discomfort in your chest or arms</li> <li>• you become unwell.</li> </ul>	<p>Daytime:.....</p> <p>Night/weekend:.....</p> <p>Other instructions:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

**During your treatment immediately** tell the doctor or nurse looking after you if you get any of the following problems:

- soreness, pain or discomfort in the bladder
- a skin rash, itching, feeling short of breath, wheezing, fever, shivers, or feeling dizzy or unwell in any way (allergic reaction).

Tell the doctor or nurse if you get any of the following problems:

- your urine smells different or is cloudy

- you have discomfort on passing urine
- you continue to pass urine more frequently, lasting longer than 3 days after the procedure
- you have blood in your urine
- you are on antibiotics

## Other information about your treatment

### Before your treatment

You will be required to have a urine test before you start treatment. This is because you cannot be given BCG treatment if you have a urinary tract infection or if you have blood in your urine.

Do not drink fluids for four to six hours before, and during your treatment. This is important as it will prevent the BCG from being diluted while it is in your bladder and will help you keep the drug in your bladder for the full two hours.

If you are on diuretics (fluid tablets)

- do not take your fluid tablets if your treatment is in the morning, take them after your treatment; or
- take your fluid tablets early in the morning if you are having treatment in the afternoon.

### During your treatment

A urinary catheter (a flexible tube that drains urine) is inserted into your bladder. A local anaesthetic gel is used to reduce any discomfort during the insertion. After urine has drained into the catheter bag, 50 mL of BCG solution is administered through the urinary catheter into your bladder.

The urinary catheter is then either removed from your bladder at that time or left in place until the treatment has finished. To keep the drug in contact with your bladder, you will be asked not to pass urine for two hours. You may also be asked to turn onto your left hand side, then the right hand side and to stand up, to allow the drug to coat the entire surface of your bladder.

### After your treatment

For six hours after your treatment pass urine sitting down and empty one sachet of sodium hypochlorite or two cups of bleach into the toilet. The toilet must not be flushed for 15 minutes. If you have a septic system you can use bleach that is safe for use with septic systems. This is to stop the BCG bacteria going into the environment.

Avoid getting the BCG in contact with your skin. If the solution does get onto your skin it may cause a rash if not washed off. After you pass urine into the toilet wash your genital area with soap and warm water and wash your hands.

Drink plenty of fluids in the first six to eight hours after your treatment.

Abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 week after treatment, or use a condom. This is to prevent your partner being exposed to the BCG bacteria.

## Side effects

Cancer treatments can cause damage to normal cells in your body, which can cause side effects. Everyone gets different side effects, and some people will have more problems than others.

The table below shows some of the side effects you may get with this treatment. You are unlikely to get all of those listed and you may also get some side effects that have not been listed.

Tell your doctor or nurse about any side effects that worry you. Follow the instructions below and those given to you by your doctor or nurse.

Immediate (onset hours to days)	
<b>Allergic reaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allergic reactions are uncommon but can be life threatening.</li> <li><b>If you feel unwell during the infusion or shortly after it, or:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>get a fever, shivers or shakes</li> <li>feel dizzy, faint, confused or anxious</li> <li>start wheezing or have difficulty breathing</li> <li>have a rash, itch or redness of the face</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>While you are in hospital:</b> Tell your doctor or nurse immediately.</p> <p><b>After you leave:</b> Contact your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department.</p>
<b>Nausea and vomiting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit).</li> <li>Take your anti-sickness medication as directed even if you don't feel sick.</li> <li>Drink plenty of fluids (unless you are fluid restricted).</li> <li>Eat small meals more frequently.</li> <li>Try food that does not require much preparation.</li> <li>Try bland foods like dry biscuits or toast.</li> <li>Gentle exercise may help with nausea.</li> <li>Ask your doctor or nurse for eviQ patient information - <a href="#">Nausea and vomiting during cancer treatment</a>.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have uncontrolled vomiting or feel dizzy or light-headed.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Flu-like symptoms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may get: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a fever</li> <li>chills or sweats</li> <li>muscle and joint pain</li> <li>a cough</li> <li>headaches.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Tell your doctor or nurse if you get any of the symptoms listed above.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have a temperature of 38°C or higher.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Bladder inflammation (cystitis)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may have pain or discomfort when passing urine, the feeling of an urgency to urinate, or you may urinate more than normal.</li> <li>These symptoms usually only last for about 48 hours.</li> <li>You should drink at least eight glasses of water a day (unless you are fluid restricted).</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible if you notice blood in your urine, or it looks cloudy or smells different to normal.</b></li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to your nearest hospital Emergency Department, if you are unable to pass urine or if you have a temperature of 38°C or higher.</b></li> </ul>
Early (onset days to weeks)	
<b>Joint and muscle pain and stiffness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may get muscle, joint or general body pain and stiffness.</li> <li>Applying a heat pack to affected areas may help.</li> <li>Talk to your doctor or nurse about other ways to manage these symptoms. You may need medication to help with any pain.</li> </ul>
<b>BCG related infection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a rare side effect but can be very serious.</li> <li>Your doctor will explain the risk of this happening.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have a temperature of 38°C or higher, or drenching night sweats.</b></li> </ul>

## General advice for patients having cancer treatment

## Chemotherapy safety

- Learn how to keep you and your family safe while you are having anticancer drugs.
- See our patient information sheet - [Chemotherapy safety at home](#).

## Blood clot risk

- Cancer and anticancer drugs can increase the risk of a blood clot (thrombosis).
- Tell your doctor if you have a family history of blood clots.
- A blood clot can cause pain, redness, swelling in your arms or legs, shortness of breath or chest pain.
- If you have any of these symptoms go to your nearest hospital Emergency Department.

## Medications and vaccinations

- Before you start treatment, tell your doctor about any medications you are taking, including vitamins or herbal supplements.
- Don't stop or start any medications during treatment without talking to your doctor and pharmacist first.
- Vaccinations such as flu and tetanus vaccines are safe to receive while you are having treatment. If you are unsure, check with your doctor before you have any vaccinations.

## Diet

- While you are receiving this treatment it is important that you try to maintain a healthy diet.
- Speak to your doctor or nurse about whether drinking alcohol is safe with your treatment.
- If you have any concerns about recent weight loss or weight gain or questions about your diet, ask to speak to a dietitian.

## Fertility

- Some cancer treatments can reduce your fertility. This can make it difficult or impossible to get pregnant or father a child.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse before you start any treatment. Depending on your situation there may be fertility sparing options available to you and/or your partner, discuss these with your doctor or nurse.

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding

- Some cancer treatments can be dangerous to unborn babies. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you think there is any chance that you could be pregnant.
- Do not try to get pregnant or father a child during this treatment. Contraception should be used during treatment and after stopping treatment. Ask your doctor or nurse about what type of contraception you should use.
- If you are planning pregnancy/fatherhood after completing this treatment, talk to your doctor. Some doctors advise waiting between 6 months and 2 years after treatment.
- Do not breastfeed if you are on this treatment, as anti-cancer medications can also pass into breast milk.

## Sex life and sexuality

- The desire to have sex may decrease as a result of this treatment or its side effects.
- Your emotions and the way you feel about yourself may also be affected by this treatment.
- It may help to discuss your concerns with your partner and doctor or nurse.

## Quitting smoking

- It is never too late to quit smoking. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to help your treatment work better.
- There are many effective tools to improve your chances of quitting.
- Talk to your treating team for more information and referral to a smoking cessation support service.

## Staying active

- Research shows that exercise, no matter how small, has many benefits for people during and after cancer treatment.
- Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Your doctor can advise whether you need a modified exercise program.

For more information about cancer treatment, side effects and side effect management see our [Patient and carers](#) section.

## Where to get more information

### Telephone support

- Call Cancer Council on 13 11 20 for cancer information and support

**Bladder and urinary tract cancer information**

- Australian Government Bladder and Bowel – [bladderbowel.gov.au](http://bladderbowel.gov.au)
- Australian Government Department of Health & Ageing Stoma appliance scheme – [health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Stoma+Appliance+Scheme-1](http://health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Stoma+Appliance+Scheme-1)
- BEAT Bladder Cancer Australia Inc. – [beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au/](http://beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au/)
- Continence Foundation of Australia – [continence.org.au](http://continence.org.au)
- National Continence Program – [health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-continence-program-ncp](http://health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-continence-program-ncp)
- National Public Toilet map – [toiletmap.gov.au](http://toiletmap.gov.au)
- Recovering after Pelvic Radiation Therapy: A guide for women – [sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/cemped/docs/Pelvic\\_Radiation\\_Therapy\\_Recovery\\_Booklet\\_for\\_Women.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/cemped/docs/Pelvic_Radiation_Therapy_Recovery_Booklet_for_Women.pdf)

**General cancer information and support**

- Australian Rare Cancer (ARC) Portal – [arcportal.org.au/](http://arcportal.org.au/)
- Beyondblue – [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)
- Cancer Australia – [canceraustralia.gov.au](http://canceraustralia.gov.au)
- Cancer Council Australia – [cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au)
- Cancer Voices Australia – [cancervoicesaustralia.org](http://cancervoicesaustralia.org)
- CanTeen – [canteen.org.au](http://canteen.org.au)
- Carers Australia – [carersaustralia.com.au](http://carersaustralia.com.au)
- CHILL Cancer related hair loss - [scalpcooling.org](http://scalpcooling.org)
- eviQ Cancer Treatments Online – [eviq.org.au](http://eviq.org.au)
- Look Good Feel Better – [lgfb.org.au](http://lgfb.org.au)
- Patient Information – [patients.cancer.nsw.gov.au](http://patients.cancer.nsw.gov.au)
- Radiation Oncology Targeting Cancer – [targetingcancer.com.au](http://targetingcancer.com.au)
- Redkite – [redkite.org.au](http://redkite.org.au)
- Return Unwanted Medicines – [returnmed.com.au](http://returnmed.com.au)
- Staying active during cancer treatment – [patients.cancer.nsw.gov.au/coping-with-cancer/physical-wellbeing/staying-active](http://patients.cancer.nsw.gov.au/coping-with-cancer/physical-wellbeing/staying-active)

**Quit smoking information and support**

Quitting smoking is helpful even after you have been diagnosed with cancer. The following resources provide useful information and support to help you quit smoking. Talk to your treating team about any other questions you may have.

- Call Quitline on 13 QUIT (13 78 48)
- iCanQuit – [iCanQuit.com.au](http://iCanQuit.com.au)
- Patient Information – [patients.cancer.nsw.gov.au/coping-with-cancer/physical-wellbeing/quitting-smoking](http://patients.cancer.nsw.gov.au/coping-with-cancer/physical-wellbeing/quitting-smoking)
- Quitnow – [quitnow.gov.au](http://quitnow.gov.au)

**Additional notes:**

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This document is a guide only and cannot cover every possible situation. The health professionals caring for you should always consider your individual situation when making decisions about your care. Contact your cancer clinic staff or doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your treatment, or you are having problems coping with side effects. While eviQ endeavours to link to reliable sources that provide accurate information, eviQ and the Cancer Institute NSW do not endorse or accept responsibility for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of the content of linked external information sources. Use of this document is subject to eviQ's disclaimer available at [www.eviq.org.au](http://www.eviq.org.au)

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**First approved:** 10 July 2019

**Review due:** 30 June 2024

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*<https://www.eviq.org.au/pi/607>*

*10 Feb 2023*