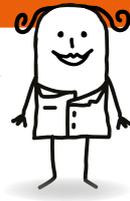


A bladder cancer glossary

We've put together a list of the medical terms you might hear people use when they talk about bladder cancer.



Abdomen

The middle part of your body that contains your stomach, intestines, liver, bladder and other organs.

Adenocarcinoma

A bladder cancer that begins in cells that line the bladder and that have gland-like properties.

Adjuvant

Additional cancer treatment given after the primary treatment to lower the risk that the cancer will come back. **Adjuvant therapy** may include chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Analgesic

A drug used to relieve pain (a painkiller).

Anaesthesia

The loss of feeling or awareness that is induced to stop you feeling any pain during an operation. **Local anaesthetics** cause loss of feeling in a part of the body. **General anaesthetics** put you to sleep.

Antibiotic

A drug belonging to a large group of agents used to get rid of bacterial infections such as a UTI (urinary tract infection).

Anti-inflammatory (NSAID)

A drug that reduces inflammation and helps to relieve pain.

BCG treatment (immunotherapy)

A form of treatment for non-invasive bladder cancer. A catheter is used to place the BCG solution into the bladder. The solution contains live, weakened bacteria (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) that activate the immune system to fight the cancer. The BCG solution used for bladder cancer is not the same as the BCG vaccine, which is a vaccine for tuberculosis.

Benign

When something is not cancerous and does not invade nearby tissue or spread to other parts of the body.

Biopsy

A tissue sample taken from any organ or part of the body to check if there is an abnormality. When a sample of tissue or fluid is removed with a needle, the procedure is called a **needle biopsy** or **fine-needle aspiration**.

Bladder

The organ of the body that stores your wee.

Bladder cancer

Cancer that forms in the tissues of the bladder. Most bladder cancers are **transitional cell carcinomas** (cancer that begins in the cells that normally make up the inner lining of the bladder).

Other types include **squamous cell carcinoma** (cancer that begins in thin, flat cells) and **adenocarcinoma** (cancer that begins in the cells that make and release mucus and other fluids). The cells that form squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma develop in the inner lining of the bladder as a result of chronic irritation and inflammation.

Blue light cystoscopy (see also cystoscopy)

At cystoscopy, a special “blue light” is used to make the tumours fluoresce, which makes them easier to see.

Bone scan

A method of creating images of bones on a computer screen or on film. A small amount of radioactive material is injected into a blood vessel and travels through the bloodstream; it collects in the bones and is detected by a scanner.

Cancer

A term for diseases in which abnormal cells divide uncontrollably.

Carcinogen

Any substance that is known to cause cancer.

Carcinoma in situ

A particular type of bladder cancer that sits on the internal surface of the bladder but has not spread to neighbouring tissues.

Catheter

A rubberised or silicone tube passed into a hollow organ (usually the bladder) to drain its contents.

Chemotherapy

Treatment with anti-cancer drugs.

Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)

A specialist urology cancer nurse who is your main source of information and advice during and after treatment.

Clinical trial

A research study that tests how well new medical treatments or other interventions work in people. Each study is designed to test new methods of screening, preventing, diagnosing, or treating a disease.

Co-morbidity

Another disorder (or disease) that increases your susceptibility to complications.

Continence

The ability to control the flow of wee from the bladder to the outside of the body.

CT scan (computed tomography scan)

A series of detailed pictures of areas inside the body taken from different angles; the pictures are created by a computer linked to an X-ray machine. Also called a CAT scan.

Cystectomy (radical cystectomy or RC)

Surgical removal of the bladder, usually to treat invasive bladder cancer.

Cystitis

Inflammation of the internal lining of the bladder.

Cystoscope

A thin instrument with a light, used to look inside the bladder and remove tissue samples or small tumours.

Cystoscopy

Inspection of the bladder using a telescope (either flexible or rigid) with an attached light source to illuminate the interior of the bladder.

Cytology

The study of individual cells, usually in the wee, to identify malignancy or disorders.

Detrusor muscle

The interlocking fibres that form the muscle of the bladder wall.

Dilatation

Stretching or widening of an opening, usually the urethra or neck of the bladder.

Diverticulum

An abnormal pouch leading off the cavity of the bladder.

Dribbling

Leakage after the normal passage of wee due to either obstruction or to an abnormal outpouching of the urethra (diverticulum).

Dysuria

The painful passage of wee through the body.

Endourology

A term for inspecting the internal lining of organs of the urinary tract using a telescope and a light source.

Erectile dysfunction (ED)

The inability to obtain or maintain an erection sufficient for penetration and the satisfaction of both sexual partners.

External radiation

Radiation therapy that uses a machine to aim high-energy rays at the cancer. Also called external-beam radiation.

Extravasation

Leakage of wee or surgical irrigation fluid outside the urinary tract.

Frequency problem

Weeing too often, usually during the day.

Fulguration

Destroying tissue using an electric current.

Grade

The grade of a tumour depends on how abnormal the cancer cells look under a microscope and how quickly the tumour is likely to grow and spread.

Hematuria

Blood in the wee. Hematuria is either **gross**, meaning that the blood can be seen with the naked eye, or **microscopic**, meaning that blood can only be detected in the wee if it is examined under a microscope.

Haemodialysis

Filtration of the blood using an external machine to remove harmful waste products in patients whose kidneys have failed.

Haemoglobin

A specialised molecule, found only in red blood cells, which transports oxygen around the body via the bloodstream; a shortage of haemoglobin is known as anaemia.

Hesitancy

Having to wait an abnormally long time for the flow of wee to start.

High-Dependency Unit (HDU)

A ward area where intermediate care is provided for patients who require more careful monitoring than is available on a normal ward.

Histology

The science of assessing tissue under a microscope to determine whether any abnormalities are present.

Ileal conduit (stoma)

A simple form of urinary tract reconstruction that utilises a small piece of intestine called the **ileum**. The ureters are implanted into this small segment of intestine; one end is closed with sutures, and the other is brought outside the body to create a small opening called a **stoma**. Your wee drains into a small pouch that fits over the stoma and attaches to the skin with an adhesive.

Immune system

The complex group of organs and cells that defends the body against infection or disease.

Immunotherapy (see BCG)

The treatment of cancer by stimulating the natural immune response, usually with BCG (Bacille Calmette Guerin).

Impotent

Being unable to have an erection adequate for sexual intercourse.

Incision

A cut made in the body during surgery.

Incontinence

Involuntary leakage of wee.

Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU, ICU)

A ward area where advanced life-support measures can be given to critically-ill patients before or after surgery.

Internal radiation

A procedure in which radioactive material sealed in needles, seeds, wires, or catheters is placed directly into or near the tumour. Also called brachytherapy, implant radiation or interstitial radiation therapy

Intravenous (IV)

This means putting drugs/fluids into a vein.

Intravenous urogram

A series of X-rays of the kidneys, ureters and bladder. The X-rays are taken after a dye is injected into a blood vessel. The dye is concentrated in the urine, which outlines the kidneys, ureters and bladder on the X-rays.

Intravesical

This basically means within the bladder. BCG treatment is called intravesical as it is placed inside the bladder via a catheter.

Invasive bladder cancer

A bladder cancer that invades the structures that lie beneath the lining cells. These tumours are capable of spreading to other parts of the body without much warning. Invasive cancers are less common than non-invasive ones.

Irrigation

The use of saline or other bottled fluids to keep the bladder clear of clotting blood before, during or after surgery.

Lamina propria

A specialised layer of blood vessels and cells that separates the bladder's surface from its muscle wall.

Laparoscope

A telescope with a light source and camera attached, that is inserted into the abdominal cavity (through a small incision) to perform 'keyhole' surgery.

Laser

An energy source for performing some types of urological surgery; light amplification by the stimulated emission of radiation.

Length of stay

The number of nights that a patient stays in hospital following a surgical or investigative procedure.

Lymph node (see lymphatic system)

Lymph nodes are spread throughout your body and filter the lymphatic fluid. Also known as a lymph gland.

Lymphatic system

The tissues and organs that produce, store, and carry white blood cells that fight infection and other diseases. This system includes the bone marrow, spleen, thymus, lymph nodes, and a network of thin tubes that carry lymph and white blood cells. These tubes branch, like blood vessels, into all the tissues of the body.

Lymphadenectomy (lymph node dissection)

Surgical removal of lymph nodes to see whether they are involved with cancer.

MRI Scan (Magnetic resonance imaging)

A procedure in which a magnet linked to a computer is used to create detailed pictures of areas inside the body.

Malignant

A growth with a tendency to invade and destroy nearby tissue and spread to other parts of the body.

Medical oncologist

A doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating cancer using chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Metastasis (Mets)

A secondary tumour (remote from the original cancer) that has arisen by spreading through the blood, the lymph system or direct invasion.

Monotherapy

Treatment of a disorder with a single drug.

Morbidity

A diseased state, disability or poor health.

Mortality rate

A measure of the number of deaths in a given population.

Multi-disciplinary team (MDT)

A group of clinicians, from all specialities, which combines to discuss individual patient problems and recommend treatment plans for each patient.

Narrow band imaging (see also cystoscopy)

A technology that uses light of blue and green wavelengths; to enhance the visibility of vascular structures on the bladder wall surface. This can help in identify suspicious lesions.

Neoadjuvant therapy

Treatment given as a first step to shrink a tumour before the main treatment is given. Examples of neoadjuvant therapy include chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Neobladder

A new bladder, usually constructed out of a piece of intestine and attached to the urethra. This is placed where the bladder was before it was removed because of the cancer.

Nephrectomy

Surgical removal of the kidney.

Nephro-ureterectomy

Surgical removal of the kidney and ureter (the tube connecting the kidney to the bladder). This is usually performed to remove a malignant tumour of the inner lining of the kidney or ureter.

Nocturia

Abnormally frequent need to wee at night.

Non-invasive bladder cancer

Where the tumours do not invade the lamina propria or muscle wall. The majority of bladder cancers are not invasive, and, though these progress in only a minority of patients, they do usually recur.

Ostomy

An operation to create an opening (a stoma) from an area inside the body to the outside. A urostomy is the name given to an ostomy when the bladder is removed.

Pathologist

A doctor who identifies diseases by studying cells and tissues under a microscope.

Photodynamic therapy

Treatment with drugs that become active when exposed to light.

Polyuria

Over-production of wee, usually at night.

Positron emission tomography (PET)

A scanning technique, occasionally used to assess the spread of cancer, which combines radioisotope scanning with CT or MRI.

Primary tumour

The original cancer tumour.

Prostate

A gland in the male reproductive system just below the bladder. It surrounds part of the urethra, the canal that empties the bladder, and produces a fluid that forms part of semen.

Quality of life (QoL)

The overall enjoyment of life. Many clinical trials measure aspects of an individual's sense of well-being and ability to perform various tasks to assess the effects of cancer and its treatment on the quality of life.

Radiation oncologist

A doctor who specializes in using radiation to treat cancer.

Radiotherapy

The use of high-energy radiation to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours. Radiation may come from a machine outside the body (external-beam radiation therapy), or from radioactive material placed in the body in the area near cancer cells (internal radiation therapy, implant radiation or brachytherapy).

Radical cystectomy (RC)

Surgery to remove the bladder as well as nearby tissues and organs.

Recurrence

Recurrence is the return of cancer, at the same site as the original tumour or in another location after the tumour had disappeared.

Risk

How likely your cancer is to return or spread.

Risk factor

A habit, trait, condition or genetic alteration that increases a person's chance of developing a disease.

Side effects

Problems that occur during or after treatment.

Sphincter muscle

A specialized muscle that effectively cuts off the flow of wee when contracted.

Squamous cell carcinoma

A cancer that begins in squamous cells, which are thin, flat cells resembling fish scales. Squamous cells are found in the tissue that forms the surface of the lining of the bladder.

Stage

The extent of how far the cancer has spread from the surface of the lining of the bladder.

Staging

Performing exams and tests to learn the extent of the cancer has spread within the body.

Stent

A small tube or splint inserted to keep a tube or blood vessel open.

Stoma (see ileal conduit)

A surgically created opening from an area inside the body to the outside.

Stoma nurse

A nurse who has additional education and training in how to care for people who have an ostomy (an opening made by surgery, from an area inside the body to the outside).

Stricture

Abnormal scarring or narrowing.

Surveillance (or watchful waiting)

A term that describes careful and close monitoring of your cancer without any treatment. Specific intervention is used only when there are clear signs of the disease progressing.

Symptom

An indication that a person has a condition or disease. Some examples of symptoms and headache, fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting and pain.

Systemic therapy

Treatment that uses substances that travel through the bloodstream, reaching and affecting cells all over the body such as chemotherapy.

Thermotherapy

Destruction of an organ or tissue by heating to a high temperature.

TNM (see staging)

The staging system for cancer that describes the extent of the primary tumour (T), the lymph nodes (N) and metastases (M).

Transfusion

Administration of blood (or blood products) by intravenous injection.

Transitional cell carcinoma

A malignant (cancerous) tumour arising from the internal lining of the urinary tract.

Transitional cell carcinoma

A type of cancer that develops in the lining of the bladder, ureter or renal pelvis. Also referred to as urothelial cell carcinoma.

Transurethral resection (TURBT)

Surgery to remove the cancer performed with a special instrument inserted through the urethra.

Trigone

The floor of the bladder, where the ureters and urethra connect to the interior of the bladder.

Tumour

An abnormal mass of tissue that results from excessive cell division. Tumours perform no useful body function. They may be benign (not cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

Ultrasound

A useful way of examining many of the body's internal organs, including the bladder.

Ureter

The thin, muscular tube which propels urine down from the kidneys to the bladder.

Urethra

The tube through that wee passes to the outside of the body from the bladder.

Urgency

A sudden, irresistible desire to wee.

Urine

Your wee. Contains water and waste products. Wee is made by the kidneys, stored in the bladder, and leaves the body through the urethra.

Urologic oncologist

A doctor who specializes in treating cancers of the urinary system.

Urologist

A doctor who specializes in diseases of the urinary organs.

Urostomy

An operation to create an opening from inside the body to the outside, making a new way to wee.

Voiding

Weeing.

Watchful waiting (see Surveillance)

X-ray

A picture taken using non-visible wavelengths of light to produce images of parts of the body.



About Fight Bladder Cancer

Fight Bladder Cancer is the only patient and carer led charity for bladder cancer in the UK.

At Fight Bladder Cancer, we take great care to provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts about bladder cancer. We have a very supportive medical advice panel made up of some of the best professionals working with bladder cancer, and hope that our information will add to the medical advice you have had and help you to make decisions.

To donate, go to our **Just Giving** page:

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AND ADDITIONAL DOWNLOADS ON OUR WEBSITE:

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