

Bladder Cancer

What is bladder cancer?

Bladder cancer is a type of cancer that is found in the tissue of the bladder (the organ that collects and stores urine).

What causes it?

No one knows the exact cause of bladder cancer. People who work in the rubber, chemical, and leather industries, and hairdressers, machinists, metal workers, printers, painters, textile workers, and truck drivers have a higher risk of bladder cancer. People who are infected with a tropical parasite (called Schistosoma [SHIS-to-so-muh] species) have a higher risk, but these parasites are not common in the United States.

Smoking greatly increases the risk of getting and dying from bladder cancer. White people get bladder cancer twice as often as black and Hispanic people. Older people have a higher risk than younger people. People with family members who have bladder cancer are more likely to get it. Men get bladder cancer more often than women.

What are the symptoms?

Bladder cancer can cause blood in your urine. You may be able to see the blood, but sometimes

it can only be seen with a microscope. Other symptoms include pain during urination; urinating more often; or trying to urinate, but not being able to.

How does my doctor know if I have it?

Your doctor may do a physical exam, including a rectal or pelvic exam. He or she may also test your urine for blood, cancer cells, and other signs of disease. You may need a cystoscopy, which is when your doctor puts a lighted tube into your bladder to look for growths or tumors. Your doctor may also take a small sample of tissue to look at under a microscope (called a biopsy).

How is it treated?

It depends on how deep the tumor is into the bladder wall. Surgery to remove tumors from the bladder may be done through the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder). Surgery to remove the bladder and any nearby tissues and organs is another option. There are many treatments available, so talk to your doctor about which one is best for you.



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Bladder Cancer (continued)

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Academy of Family Physicians
Web site: <http://familydoctor.org>

American Cancer Society
Telephone: 1-800-227-2345
Web site: <http://www.cancer.org>

American Urological Association Foundation
Telephone: 1-800-828-7866
Web site: <http://www.urologyhealth.org/adult/index.cfm?cat=03&topic=37>

National Cancer Institute
Telephone: 1-800-422-6237
Web site: <http://www.cancer.gov>

National Institutes of Health
Web site: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/cystoscopymale/htm/_no_75_no_0.htm

Notes:

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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