

Bladder Cancer Treatment Overview

Bladder Cancer Treatment At Birmingham Urology Centre

Bladder cancer treatment varies depending on the stage, grade, and overall health of the patient. At Birmingham Urology Centre, we provide comprehensive care using the latest advancements in medical technology to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Understanding Your Treatment Options

Treatment for bladder cancer is highly personalised, and your urologist will discuss the most suitable options based on the specifics of your condition. The main treatment options include:

Surgery

- **Transurethral resection of bladder tumour (TURBT):** This is a common procedure for early-stage bladder cancer. The tumour is removed from the bladder lining using a cystoscope inserted through the urethra. TURBT may be followed by intravesical therapy to reduce the risk of recurrence.
- **Cystectomy:** If the cancer is more advanced or has returned after initial treatment, part or all of the bladder may need to be removed.
 - **Partial cystectomy:** Only the affected portion of the bladder is removed.
 - **Radical cystectomy:** The entire bladder is removed, and a new way for urine to exit your body is created, either through a urostomy or a neobladder reconstruction.

Intravesical Therapy

This treatment is administered directly into the bladder via a catheter. It is commonly used after TURBT to prevent recurrence, particularly for non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer (early bladder cancer).

- **Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) therapy:** This immunotherapy uses a weakened strain of the tuberculosis bacterium to stimulate your immune system to attack cancer cells in the bladder lining.
- **Intravesical chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy drugs are delivered directly into the bladder to target cancer cells locally, reducing the risk of systemic side effects.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy may be used in different ways depending on the stage of your bladder cancer:

- **Neoadjuvant chemotherapy:** Administered before surgery to shrink the tumour, making it easier to remove.
- **Adjuvant chemotherapy:** Given after surgery to eliminate any remaining cancer cells and reduce the risk of recurrence.
- **Systemic chemotherapy:** Used when cancer has spread beyond the bladder. The drugs are administered intravenously and circulate throughout the body.

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy uses high-energy radiation to target and destroy cancer cells. It may be used in combination with other treatments or as the primary treatment if surgery isn't an option.

- **External beam radiotherapy (EBRT):** This involves directing radiation at the bladder from outside the body. It is often combined with chemotherapy (chemoradiation) to enhance its effectiveness.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy helps your immune system recognise and attack cancer cells more effectively. It may be used for advanced bladder cancer or when other treatments are not suitable.

- **Immune checkpoint inhibitors:** These drugs block proteins that prevent the immune system from attacking cancer cells, allowing your body to fight the cancer more effectively.

Targeted Therapy

Targeted therapy drugs work by identifying and attacking specific characteristics of cancer cells, such as proteins or genes, that help them grow and spread.

- **Fibroblast growth factor receptor (FGFR) inhibitors:** These drugs are used for certain types of advanced bladder cancer with specific genetic mutations.

Recovery And Follow-Up Care

Recovery from bladder cancer treatment will vary based on the type of treatment you receive. After surgery or radiotherapy, you may need time to heal and regain strength. Your urologist will provide detailed aftercare instructions to help manage any side effects and promote recovery.

Regular follow-up appointments are crucial to monitor your progress, detect any signs of recurrence, and manage any long-term effects of treatment. These may include cystoscopies, urine tests, and imaging scans.

Risks And Side Effects

Bladder cancer treatments, like all medical procedures, carry potential risks and side effects. Your urologist will discuss these with you in detail to ensure you are fully informed before starting treatment. Common risks may include:

- **Surgical risks:** Infection, bleeding, and injury to surrounding organs.
- **Chemotherapy risks:** Nausea, vomiting, hair loss, fatigue, and increased risk of infection.
- **Radiotherapy risks:** Bladder irritation, skin reactions, and bowel issues.
- **Immunotherapy risks:** Flu-like symptoms, immune reactions, and bladder irritation.

Why Choose Birmingham Urology Centre

At Birmingham Urology Centre, our highly skilled urologists provide personalised care for bladder cancer patients. We follow the latest guidelines to ensure that you receive the most up-to-date and effective treatments available. Our approach is tailored to your individual needs, focusing on early detection, advanced treatment options, and comprehensive follow-up care to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Contact us

If you have been diagnosed with bladder cancer or have concerns about your urinary health, contact Birmingham Urology Centre today. Our expert team is here to guide you through every step of your treatment journey, providing the highest standard of care and support. Schedule your consultation today to discuss your treatment options and take the next step towards better health.