



For the Patient: BCG
Other names: Bacillus Calmette-Guérin,
OncoTICE®, IMMUCYST®

- **BCG**, is a drug that is used to treat bladder cancer. It is a cloudy liquid that is given through a small tube into the bladder.
- **Limit the liquids** you drink for 4-8 hours before your treatment, especially liquids with caffeine. You will be less likely to create urine and need to urinate during your treatment.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to BCG before receiving BCG.
- Your doctor or nurse inserts a **catheter** (small tube) into your bladder and drains out any urine. The BCG is given into your bladder by attaching a syringe to the catheter. The catheter is then removed.
- You will be asked to **hold** the BCG in your bladder for as long as possible up to **2 hours** after each treatment.
 - Be sure to lie on your stomach for the first 15 minutes after treatment.
 - After lying on your stomach you may be advised to lie on your back for 15 minutes, then on your side for 15 minutes, and then on your other side for 15 minutes.
 - In other cases, after lying on your stomach for 15 minutes you may be told to get up and move around. Either way, this makes sure that the BCG completely covers the inside of your bladder.
- Unless otherwise advised by your doctor, you should **drink** extra fluids for the next 24 hours so that you will pass more urine. Urinate frequently. This helps prevent bladder problems.
- As BCG is potentially infectious, **sit** when urinating and **flush** the toilet **twice** to safely dispose of BCG in your urine. Alternatively, you may add 1-2 cups of household bleach to the urine in the toilet and letting it sit for 15 minutes before flushing. **Wash** your hands and genital area well with soap and water after urinating. Follow these directions for six hours following treatment.
- If it is necessary to **decontaminate** surfaces that have come into contact with urine containing BCG, a 1:20 dilution of household bleach may be used (approximately 1 ounce of bleach in 1 cup of warm water).

- Other drugs may **interact** with BCG. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of BCG.
- **Use** a condom or **abstain** from sex for **1 week** after treatment.
- It is not known if BCG may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with BCG. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with BCG before you receive any treatment from them.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea does not usually occur with BCG.	
A flu-like illness may sometimes occur shortly after your treatment. You may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and joint aches. Flu-like symptoms usually disappear on their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • Fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be a sign of an infection. Report this to your doctor immediately.
Bladder irritation commonly occurs. Symptoms may include discomfort when urinating, urinating more frequently, blood in the urine, and frequent urge to urinate.	If severe, your next treatment may be delayed.
Muscle or joint pain may rarely occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Loss of appetite and weight loss may rarely occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Tiredness and lack of energy may rarely occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*
Hair loss does not occur with BCG.	

***Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- **Skin rash** or **itching**.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Uncontrolled diarrhea.
- Headache or pain not controlled with acetaminophen (e.g., **TYLENOL®**).
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Signs of bladder problems such as severe pain when you urinate, frequent need to urinate, blood in your urine, or abdominal pain.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR
