



# BLADDER CANCER:

## Symptoms, Cause & Treatment Options

The most common type of bladder cancer, called transitional cell cancer starts in the inner layer of the bladder. It happens most often in people who are in their 60s or older. Experts don't know what causes bladder cancer, however, smoking cigarettes or being exposed to certain chemicals raises your risk. And like other cancers, changes in the DNA of your cells seem to play a role. Bladder cancer can often be successfully treated if it is found and treated early.

The symptoms of bladder cancer may be similar to symptoms of other bladder conditions. **The most common symptoms of bladder cancer include:**

- Blood in the urine (hematuria). Hematuria, which is often painless, is the most common symptom in those diagnosed with bladder cancer.
- Pain during urination (dysuria).
- Urinating small amounts frequently.
- Difficulty holding urine.
- Frequent urinary tract infections (UTIs).

**To diagnose bladder cancer, your doctor will:**

- Ask about your medical history and do a physical exam.
- Test your urine to look for blood or abnormal cells.
- Do a cystoscopy, a test that looks into your bladder with a thin, lighted viewing tool. Small tissue samples (biopsies) are taken and looked at under a microscope to find out if there are cancer cells.

**Treatment choices for bladder cancer include:**

- **Surgery** to remove any cancer. Sometimes lasers or other methods can be used to get rid of tumors.
- **Chemotherapy**, which uses medicine to destroy cancer cells.
- **Immunotherapy**, which causes your body's natural defense system to attack bladder cancer cells.
- **Radiation therapy**, which uses high-dose X-rays to kill cancer cells.

The treatment depends a lot on how much the cancer has grown. Most bladder cancers are treated without having to remove the bladder.

Adapted from WEBMD 2013 Bladder Cancer Health Topics



"Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life," ~ Proverbs 10:17 (NRSV)  
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