

Talking With Patients About Advances in NMIBC Care

As research advances, patients and families may come to you with questions about how bladder cancer monitoring and treatment are evolving. The following answers are suggestions for how to address common questions they may have when learning about NMIBC care.



Are there other tests that can replace cystoscopy, or new ways to detect bladder cancer?

A: Urine tests are already used alongside cystoscopy to help monitor bladder cancer. Researchers are developing new urine-based tests that may help detect signs of bladder cancer by looking at very small signals from cancer cells in urine. These newer tests are designed to provide additional information alongside cystoscopy. While cystoscopy remains the most reliable way for your urologist to look directly into the bladder, these newer urine-based biomarkers and molecular tests may help enable earlier detection.

I've heard that viruses can be used to treat cancer. How would that work for bladder cancer?

A: Some newer bladder cancer treatments use specially designed viruses. These viruses are modified to help the body. Instead, they are delivered directly into the bladder. Once there, they can help activate the body's immune system, so it recognizes and attacks cancer cells. Researchers are continuing to study these therapies to better understand how they can help people with bladder cancer.

Do these new developments mean I might be able to keep my bladder?

A: That is one of the major goals of many new treatments for NMIBC. While every person's situation is different, many newer approaches are designed to help control the cancer while delaying—or possibly avoiding—the need to remove the bladder.

Will new technologies help identify recurrences sooner?

A: That is one of the goals of several emerging technologies in bladder cancer care. Newer urine-based biomarker tests and molecular assays are being studied to improve sensitivity, which may help your urologist detect recurrence earlier or with greater confidence during surveillance. Enhanced visualization tools used during cystoscopy may also help identify tumors or lesions that can be harder to see with standard white light alone.

What new treatments are being explored for NMIBC?

A: Several newer treatment approaches are being explored for NMIBC. Some are designed to improve how medication is delivered inside the bladder, helping it stay in contact with the bladder lining longer. Others are being developed to improve how well treatments penetrate bladder tissue. Researchers are also studying newer therapies that may help the immune system recognize and attack cancer cells. Together, these approaches are part of a broader effort to expand bladder-preserving treatment options.

NMIBC=non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer.

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