Patient information factsheet

Mitomycin C intravesical treatment (post-TURBT)

This factsheet has been developed to give you information about mitomycin C intravesical therapy. It is not meant to replace discussion with your doctor or nurse but we hope it will help to answer some of the questions that you may have. If there is anything you do not understand, a member of your healthcare team will be happy to explain further.

What is mitomycin C intravesical therapy and why might it be needed?
During your TURBT operation (transurethral resection of bladder tumour) your surgeon will remove the entire visible tumour from your bladder. However, single cancerous cells are extremely small – too small to be seen by the human eye – so some people will also require intravesical therapy, which is when a drug called mitomycin C (a purple coloured solution which destroys cancerous cells) is put directly into your bladder through a thin tube called a catheter. The drug attacks any floating cancerous cells, but does little damage to your normal, healthy bladder lining. By destroying these floating cells we aim to reduce the risk of the tumour coming back.

Is mitomycin chemotherapy?
It is a chemotherapy drug, but because it is put straight into your bladder and not injected into your veins, you will not get the side effects people often associate with chemotherapy such as hair loss, nausea and vomiting.

What does the treatment involve?

Before your treatment
Following your operation to remove the bladder tumour, you will have a catheter placed inside your bladder to drain your urine. There may be two bags of irrigation fluid on a drip stand next to your bed. These are used to flush your bladder out and wash away any excess blood.

If you have had a general anaesthetic, it’s possible that you will still be asleep when the mitomycin treatment is given. If you are awake, you will be asked to limit the amount you drink to a few small sips. You will be able to eat however. If you have irrigation running (when the catheter is connected to a bag of salt solution to flush out any clots of blood) this will be stopped in order to make the mitomycin more effective.

The treatment itself
Your nurse or doctor will put the mitomycin directly into your bladder through the catheter (the instillation), and the catheter will be clamped shut to stop the fluid escaping. If you have had a general anaesthetic, this may be done before you are fully awake.

When you are awake, if you notice any leakage from or around the catheter please inform the nursing staff immediately.
After your treatment
After one hour, the catheter is unclamped and the mitomycin will drain into the catheter bag. The first time the bag needs emptying a nurse will do this for you and then show you how to do this for yourself.

It is important to avoid getting mitomycin in contact with your skin, so please wash your hands with warm soapy water:

- immediately after emptying your catheter bag
- if your catheter leaks (bypasses) or
- if you spill some urine on you

If you are still in hospital, please let one of the nursing staff know that some mitomycin has come into contact with your skin.

Are there any side effects of mitomycin?
The more common side effects are:

- blood in the urine
- frequent urge to urinate
- pain on urination
- fatigue or feeling very tired
- flu like symptoms:
  - low grade fever (less than 37.5°C)
  - chills
  - headaches
  - muscle aches
  - joint pain

These symptoms usually last less than 48 hours. Paracetamol (which you can buy over the counter without a prescription) can help you feel more comfortable.

Less common side effects of mitomycin
Approximately 10% of people treated with mitomycin may experience an allergic reaction causing a skin rash, but this doesn’t stop them being able to have the treatment. Very rarely, the mitomycin can leak outside the bladder wall which may be painful.

If you have any of these symptoms lasting longer than 48 hours, please contact the urology ward on 023 8120 6510 or the Healthcare at Home team, if you are under their care.

You should call 999 immediately if you have any of the following:

- dizziness
- a fast heartbeat
- swelling of your face
- breathing problems
Reducing the likelihood of side effects
To help reduce the likelihood of having any side effects from mitomycin, you can:

- Drink lots of fluid – eight to ten glasses of water per day will help dilute any mitomycin and flush it out of your system. This will also reduce the risk of developing a urine infection after the procedure.
- Flush the toilet twice and wash your hands and any areas of skin that may have been splashed with soap and water after emptying the catheter.
- If there are young children at home always make sure the toilet is flushed so they cannot come into contact with any mitomycin.

If you have any questions or concerns
If you have any questions or concerns about anything covered in this leaflet, the urology ward on 023 8120 6510 or the Healthcare at Home team, if you are under their care.

Further information

British Association of Urological Surgeons
www.baus.org.uk

Patient UK
www.patient.co.uk

Wessex Cancer Trust
www.wessexcancer.org

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.