

## Talk to Your Doctor About Your Bladder Cancer Diagnosis

Understanding your bladder cancer diagnosis is the first step in making informed decisions about your care. Your doctor will use a variety of tests help determine your cancer's stage and grade. The results will help guide the treatment approaches that may be right for you. Be proactive by:

- **Confirming that you have had all relevant testing** needed for an accurate diagnosis.
- **Asking about the stage of your bladder cancer** and whether it is non-muscle invasive, muscle-invasive, or advanced.
- **Inquiring about the grade of your cancer.** The grade can provide clues about how quickly the cancer may grow or spread.
- **Reviewing your test results with your healthcare team** so you understand how they affect your treatment options.
- **Considering seeking a second opinion** from a bladder cancer specialist.
- If something isn't clear, **don't hesitate to ask questions** or to request additional information.

## Bladder Cancer Testing

- **Urine cytology:** Laboratory test that examines a urine sample under a microscope to detect abnormal cells.
- **Cystoscopy:** Using a hollow tube (cystoscope) inserted into the urethra to examine the lining of the bladder.
- **TURBT (Transurethral Resection of a Bladder Tumor):** Common surgical procedure used to diagnose, stage, and treat bladder cancer by removing abnormal growths or tumors from inside the bladder.
- **Imaging tests:** CT scans, MRI scans, or PET scans can help determine whether the cancer has spread outside the bladder.

## Bladder Cancer Grades

**Low-grade bladder cancer:** The cancer cells look more like normal cells and tend to grow slowly. These tumors are less likely to spread deeper into the bladder or to other parts of the body.

**High-grade bladder cancer:** The cancer cells look very different from normal cells and tend to grow more quickly. These tumors are more likely to spread deeper into the bladder and to other areas of the body.

## Bladder Cancer Staging

**Stage I (early stage):** The cancer is growing in the inner lining layer of the bladder only.

**Stage II:** The cancer is growing into the inner or outer muscle layer of the bladder wall.

**Stage III:** The cancer is growing beyond the muscle layer and into fatty tissue that surrounds the bladder.

**Stage IV:** The cancer is growing outside of the pelvic region and has spread to distant sites, such as the lung, liver, or bones. When cancer has spread to other organs, it is considered metastatic cancer.



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