

Living With and Beyond Cancer Information Sheet

3. Passing urine

Problems passing urine associated with cancer may be caused by the type of cancer (e.g. prostate or bladder cancer) or a side effect of the treatment of cancer (e.g. following pelvic radiotherapy, or surgery). Symptoms can range from a need to pass urine more frequently, a burning sensation when passing urine, blood in the urine, bladder leakage or an inability to wait when one needs to pass urine.

How can I manage my urinary problems?

- Blood in the urine might be a sign of infection (especially in the presence of burning or stinging when passing urine). However there are other causes and medical advice should always be sought because further investigations may be required .
- Whilst undergoing treatment for cancer you can become more susceptible to infections and have trouble fighting an infection. Therefore if you experience any new urinary symptoms it is important to seek medical advice.
- Urinary symptoms are often related to what we eat and drink. Drinks containing caffeine can cause bladder irritation and make things worse. In order to improve your symptoms avoid caffeine and alcohol, drink normal amounts of fluids, avoid spicy food and reduce or give up smoking. Try to stay well hydrated (having enough fluid intake).
- Avoid constipation (as this puts pressure on the bladder) by drinking enough. Eat plenty of fibre and take regular gentle exercise (*See 4. Constipation Sheet*).
- Keep a diary of how much you drink and how frequently urine is passed.
- Your family doctor (GP), community nurse, or clinical nurse specialist may be able to suggest exercises to help prevent urine leakage. A continence nurse or a physiotherapist can give more detailed advice on pelvic floor exercises that might improve the symptoms of urine leakage.
- There are also *Just Can't Wait* cards available for use at certain public toilets, which might be helpful for those affected by an urgency to pass urine (see bladder and bowel foundation below). Alternatively a public toilet key scheme "RADAR" (Disability Rights UK) allows you access to over 7000 locked public toilets around the country (www.radar.org.uk/people-living-with-health-conditions-disability/the-national-key-scheme/).
- Changes in urine colour are common with some anticancer drugs and urine can adopt a medicine-like odour in some cases. The advice in this instance is to drink plenty of fluids.
- Continence aids (such as pads and special clothing) are available through the district nurse or continence nurse.

Passing Urine

Cranberries have been found to prevent bacteria from sticking to the walls of the bladder and are thought to help prevent urinary infections so you may wish to try regularly drinking cranberry juice or taking cranberry extracts. However, avoid cranberries if you have a catheter or are taking Warfarin tablets because they can affect how Warfarin works.

Cystectomy & Urinary Diversion

Cystectomy is surgery to completely remove the bladder. People who have their bladder removed need to get used to another way of draining urine from their body.

It will take time to adjust to the new way urine drainage works. Older patients often find having a stoma and external bag easier to use, whereas younger patients prefer an internal pouch as this gives no change to their outward appearance.

People who have had their bladder removed may have some urinary incontinence, depending on what type of surgery they have had. A stoma with an external bag can leak if the bag does not fit the skin correctly. Contact your specialist stoma care nurse for help overcoming these problems.

Tips for living with a Stoma & Urostomy bag

If you have had your bladder removed you are entitled to get and use a Radar key see 'Resources' information. These keys are available from stoma equipment companies and number of support organisations. Throughout the country there are a number of public toilets, often disabled, where access is only with a Radar key. The toilets are often larger with changing table and cleaner than the average loo. It is well worth getting a key and keeping it handy in glove box of the car. Please see Local Resources information sheet on the next page.

Contact the Urology Specialist Nurses or Stoma Care Team for further information on the above.

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- Resources/Information

Local Resources:

<p>North Devon Bowel and Bladder Care Crown Yealm House Pathfields Business Park South Molton EX36 3LH 01392 675336 Email: ndht.bladderandbowel@nhs.net If you feel you need help with bladder or bowel problems, please ask your GP to refer you to us</p>	<p>A multi-disciplinary team of Nurses and Physiotherapists who assess and treat a variety of complex bladder, bowel and pelvic floor problems. The service also provides education, support and advice to other healthcare professionals. The service is also responsible for the pad service for Devon. Housebound patients with Bladder and Bowel problems will have their needs assessed by the Community Nursing Team from your local surgery, and all mobile patients are seen in our clinics.</p>
<p>Bladder Cancer Support Group, Barnstaple Contact Ansu Manoj, Urology Specialist Nurse Tel: 01271 311877 Email: a.manoj1@nhs.net Chairman: Chris Davis email: chris.davis007@gmail.com and telephone: 01271 889021 There is a new Facebook Group—please join our community North Devon Bladder Cancer Support FaceBook Group</p>	<p>It is part of the West Country Support Groups www.wessexbcs.org.uk and is supported by Action Bladder Cancer UK. Please check out the website as it has a lot of information with links to other organisations both in the UK and abroad. Come along and meet some friendly faces. Exchange experiences and get help and advice. Useful website is urostomyassociation.org.uk and helpline 01889 563191</p>
<p>Age UK Devon Advice Line: 0800 055 6112 Website: http://www.ageuk.org.uk/devon Email: info@ageukdevon.co.uk</p>	<p>Age UK provide free information and advice on a range of topics from claiming benefits to care homes. The advice line is free to call and open 08:00am –7:00pm 365 days a year</p>
<p>Macmillan Toilet Card Available from your CNS or the Seamoor Unit, NDDH, Raleigh Park, Barnstaple, EX31 4JB Tel: 01271 311579</p>	<p>This card can help if you need to use the toilet urgently when you are out as a result of your cancer treatment. Show this card to staff in shops etc. to allow access to their facilities.</p>
<p>RADAR Key (See also Just Can't Wait Card below) £4.50 Available from www.disabilityrightsuk.org</p>	<p>This unlocks locked Radar Key Region public toilets. There are national regional lists showing where the toilets are.</p>

National Resources:

<p>Action Bladder Cancer UK(ABCUK) 6 Trull Farm Buildings ,Tetbury ,Gloucestershire GL8 8SQ Tel: 0300 302 0085 Email: info@actionbladdercanceruk.org Website: www.actionbladdercanceruk.org/</p>	<p>This website has information about various aspects of bladder cancer, treatments and other issues here. However, please use this information as an additional resource - they are unable to give personal medical advice and it is always important that you discuss any concerns or questions you may have with your doctor, specialist or nurse.</p>
<p>The Bowel and Bladder Community 7, The Court, Holywell Business Park, Northfield Road, Southam, CV47 0FS General Enquiries: 01926 357220 Email: help@bladderandbowel.org https://www.bladderandbowel.org/</p>	<p>Until recently known as B&B Foundation this charity's website is packed with practical information and advice, including travel and travel insurance. The Just Can't Wait Card is now completely free of charge when ordered online. Fill out a few details and they will post your high quality, durable Just Can't Wait card to your home.</p>

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Other Resources :

<p>Fight Bladder Cancer —Our aim is to achieve better outcomes and quality of life for all those affected.</p> <p>https://fightbladdercancer.co.uk/</p> <p>Call 01844 351621 Mon-Fri 9.30—4.30pm</p> <p>Answerphone for messages outside these hours</p>	<p>UK-based bladder cancer charity founded and run by bladder cancer survivors and their families. We support everyone affected by bladder cancer, we help to raise awareness, support medical research and we campaign to affect policy at the highest levels to bring about change in bladder cancer treatments. They also have a really helpful 'Learn Section' on their website which is basically all you need to know about bladder cancer.</p>
<p>Age UK</p> <p>https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/incontinence/</p>	<p>Advice and information on bowel or bladder incontinence</p>
<p>Cancer Research UK</p> <p>Angel building 407 St John Street, London EC 1V 4AD Telephone: 020 7242 0200</p>	<p>Huge website with loads of good information about all cancer types. There is good section on living with bladder cancer which has ideas, organisations, videos and books to help you cope with diagnosis and treatment.</p>
<p>Macmillan Cancer Support Line</p> <p>www.macmillan.org.uk</p> <p>Call 0808 808 00 00 — 7 days a week 8am—8pm</p>	<p>Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. Please note that calls to this number are not free when made from outside the UK. If you are calling from outside of the UK call on +44 207 091 2230</p>
<p>Macmillan on-line Community</p>	<p>Online support— to share experiences or vent your emotions find others who understand—join today!</p>
<p>Marie Curie Support Line — Living with a terminal illness and looking for support</p> <p>www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/marie-curie-support</p>	<p>Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. The Support Line is open 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 11am – 5pm Saturday</p>
<p>Macmillan Booklets</p>	
<p>Cancer and complimentary therapies—MAC11645</p>	<p>Pelvic radiotherapy Women—MAC13944</p>
<p>Cancer and Your Sex Life—information: Men— MAC14767 Women—MAC14768</p>	<p>Managing the late effects of pelvic radiotherapy Men—MAC13825 Women—MAC13826</p>
<p>Controlling cancer pain—MAC11670</p>	<p>Managing the symptoms of cancer—MAC11671</p>
<p>Other Publications</p>	
<p>The Guide to Living With Cancer Dr Mark P Schoenberg The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001 ISBN 978-0801865190</p>	<p>An American book containing a lot of useful information about bladder cancer and its treatment. Covers risk factors, symptoms, diagnosis and the major treatments, including bladder</p>