

# BCG – Patient Experiences

## **Ian - Age 60**

Diagnosed with high grade, non-muscle invasive bladder cancer in June 2018, age 59.

BCG treatment was started after my TURBT and follow up cystoscopy, approximately 12 weeks after diagnosis. I had the standard induction – once per week for 6 weeks.

From treatment 2 onwards, my side effects became progressively worse. It took me four days to recover from treatment 2 and 3, and six days to recover from treatments 4, 5 and 6. I experienced bladder spasms, flu like symptoms, extreme urgency to pass urine and headaches. As well as these common side effects, I also experienced low blood pressure, racing pulse, breathlessness, severe bloating and weight gain. My only option was to rest and wait for the side effects to pass.

As I experienced severe symptoms during my induction BCG treatment, I made the decision with the support of my specialist, not to continue with maintenance BCG. I will be closely monitored with follow-up cystoscopies.

## **Lorraine – Age 72**

Diagnosed with high grade, non-muscle invasive bladder cancer in 2017, age 70.

I started BCG in April 2017. I've had 3 x 6 week induction BCG and continue to have maintenance BCG treatment every 3 months. In total, I have had 30 BGC treatments.

After my second treatment, I started to experience side effects; aches and pains throughout my entire body, hot and cold sweats, frequently needing to go to the toilet and feeling extremely tired. These symptoms have lessened during my maintenance treatment.

However, my most severe side effect has been continual urinary tract infections, for which I am treated with antibiotics.

## **Craig – Age 62**

Diagnosed with high grade non-muscle invasive bladder cancer at age 57.

I started my treatment with 6 weeks of induction BCG. It wasn't effective, my urologist gave me the option of trying another 6 week cycle of induction BCG or removing my bladder. I chose to try another 6 weeks of BCG. I took Ural to relieve the slight discomfort and stinging I felt when passing urine after my BCG treatments.

After several follow-up cystoscopies, my bladder cancer returned and I made the decision 14 months after initial diagnosis to have my bladder removed and replaced with a urostomy bag.

## **Phil – Age 57**

Diagnosed with low grade, non-muscle invasive bladder cancer in 2012.

I started BCG treatment about 18 months after my initial bladder cancer diagnosis. My urologist was finding small low grade tumours during my regular 3 monthly cystoscopies. We decided to start BCG to try and stop the tumours reoccurring. I had one set of 6 week BCG induction. No notable side effects were experienced, except some general tiredness and flu like symptoms, for which I took Panadol.

I am now, 5 years cancer free.