



## BLADDER CANCER

### WHY AWARENESS AND EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES.

**BEAT Bladder Cancer Australia** is raising awareness of the symptoms of bladder cancer to save lives.

#### Background

**Bladder Cancer** affects over 3000 people in Australia every year and around 1200 people die annually from the disease. Traditionally it affects men over 60, but oncologists are noticing an increasing number of younger women being diagnosed. Risk factors include smoking and working with dyes, although many bladder cancer patients have no known risk factors.

Like many cancers, bladder cancer has various stages: low grade, high grade and invasive, the latter increasing the risk of spread to other parts of the body.

The good news is that bladder cancer may be effectively treated if patients are diagnosed early. The early warning signs may include blood in the urine or irregular and/or painful urination. Often bladder cancer is misdiagnosed as a urinary tract infection.

#### How Covid has affected bladder cancer patients

During Covid there was a more than 30% drop in cancer referrals. Delayed help-seeking behaviour has resulted in a surge in advanced stages of cancer.

**BEAT Bladder Cancer Australia** was established in 2018 to promote the warning signs of bladder cancer and to support patients through their bladder cancer journey.

BEAT's website, Facebook and awareness campaigns promote the simple message of 'Blood in the Pee? See your GP', while also providing patients with a host of support information. It encourages people to take action and be thoroughly checked if they are experiencing any changes in urinary patterns or repeat urinary tract infections.

BEAT also has a major role in supporting bladder cancer patients through their health journey with detailed information on the website and monthly virtual support groups.

See [www.beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au](http://www.beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au) for more information.



## BLADDER CANCER STATISTICS



Globally, bladder cancer is:

- **9th** most common cancer
- **6th** most commonly occurring cancer in **men**
- **17th** most commonly occurring cancer in **women**.

Source: [www.wcrf.org/cancer-trends/bladder-cancer-statistics/](http://www.wcrf.org/cancer-trends/bladder-cancer-statistics/)



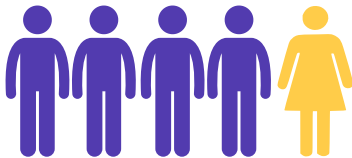
Bladder cancer is the **11th** most common cancer in **Australia**

Source: [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia/contents/cancer-rankings-data-visualisation](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia/contents/cancer-rankings-data-visualisation)

In Australia:

- Estimated number of **new cases** in 2023: **3,121**  
2,357 (males) + 764 (females)
- Estimated number of **deaths** from bladder cancer in 2023: **1,061**  
760 (males) + 301 (females)
- People **living** with bladder cancer: **20,143** (diagnosed from 1982 to 2018)

Source: [www.canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/cancer-types/bladder-cancer/bladder-cancer-statistics-australia](http://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/cancer-types/bladder-cancer/bladder-cancer-statistics-australia)



- **Men** are **3-4 times** more likely than **women** to get bladder cancer.
- **Women** often present at a **later stage** and tend to have a poorer outcome than men.
- **Women** are often **misdiagnosed** due to the similarity of symptoms to other conditions such as urinary tract infections.



Bladder cancer has a high rate of **recurrence**, patients need to be monitored for many years and often lifelong.



Bladder cancer is the most **expensive** cancer to treat from diagnosis to death. This is due to the high recurrence rate and the need for regular follow ups, investigations and treatments.

A bladder cancer diagnosis and regular reviews require a procedure called a cystoscopy – where a camera is inserted into the bladder. This procedure is often performed under general anaesthetic.



## Survival Rates

Bladder cancer survival rates have **not improved** over the decades and possibly have even declined. The 5-year survival rate is <60% for men and <50% for women.

In 2015–2019, individuals diagnosed with bladder cancer had a 57% chance (59% for males and 49% for females) of surviving for five years compared to their counterparts in the general Australian population. Between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019, five-year relative survival for bladder cancer decreased from 65% to 57%.

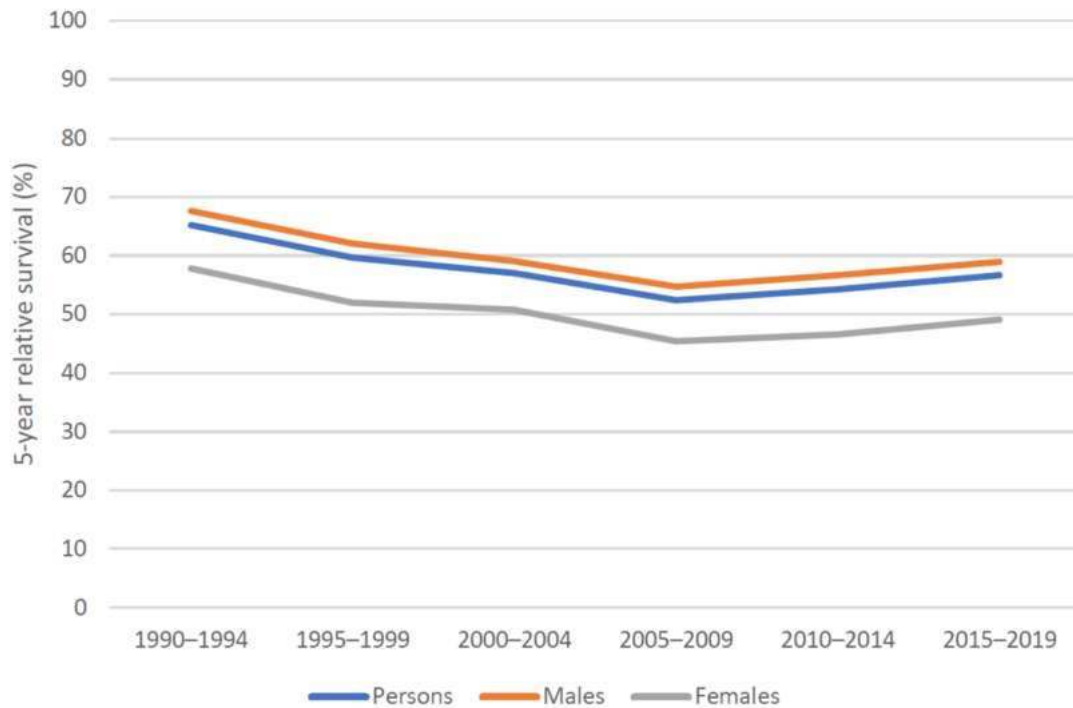


Figure 5. 5-year relative survival for bladder cancer, 1990–1994 to 2015–2019, by sex

### Notes

- Data sourced from AIHW Cancer Data in Australia 2023 web report and supplementary data tables

## Risk Factors

Bladder cancer has been associated with cigarette smoking, certain occupational chemicals and long-term inflammation of the bladder caused by therapeutic pelvic radiation or infections such as bilharzia. There may also be no obvious cause.

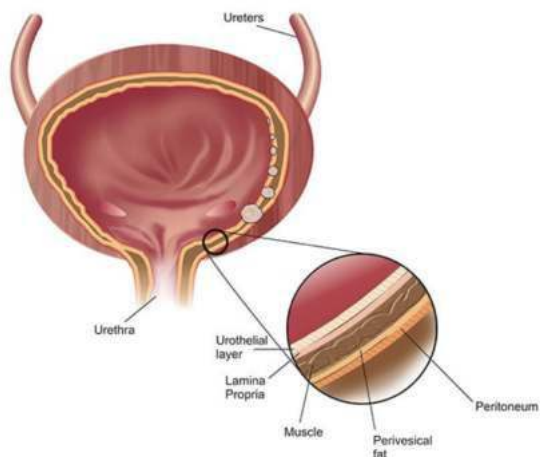
## Prevention

Smoking cessation, workplace safety practices, weight loss, exercise and schistosomiasis prevention (via water disinfection and mass drug administration) have all been shown to significantly decrease the risk of bladder cancer, which poses a growing burden around the world.

Smoking cessation has been shown to reduce the risk of bladder cancer by approximately 40% within only 1–4 years, and complete return to baseline risk by 20 years.



## May is Bladder Cancer Awareness Month



### What is bladder cancer?

Bladder cancer occurs when cells inside the organ grow out of control. As more cancer cells develop, they can form a tumour. Most bladder cancers start in the innermost lining of the bladder, which is called the urothelium or transitional epithelium. As the cancer grows into or through the other layers in the bladder wall, it becomes more advanced. Over time, the cancer might grow outside the bladder and into nearby structures. It might spread to nearby lymph nodes, distant lymph nodes, the bones, the lungs, or the liver. This is known as metastasis.

### Symptoms of Bladder Cancer

How do you know if you might have bladder cancer?

You may experience one or more of the following:

- Blood in the urine (Haematuria)
- Change in urination patterns
- Pain when urinating (Dysuria)
- Needing to urinate frequently (Frequency) Burning sensation when urinating (Dysuria)
- Incontinence
- Urinary tract infections that don't respond to antibiotics Lower tummy (abdominal) pain
- Lower back pain
- Weight loss
- Tiredness

## Initial Tests & Making the Diagnosis

Bladder cancer is diagnosed via a procedure called a **cystoscopy**. There is no blood test or urine analysis that can be used to diagnose bladder cancer.

### Cystoscopy

The passage of a small pipe/tube (endoscope) with a small camera on the end through the urethra into the bladder to assess the tumour. This is the best way to visualise a tumour – to see its size and location.

Rigid cystoscopy: usually done under general anaesthetic in the operating theatre. The advantage of a rigid cystoscopy is that a sample of the tumour (bladder biopsy) can be retrieved at the same time and sent to the laboratory for diagnosis.

## Stage of Bladder Cancer

**Non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC)** – The cancer cells are found only in the inner lining of the bladder (urothelium) or the next layer of tissue (lamina propria) and haven't grown into the deeper layers of the bladder wall. These cancers can be classed as low, medium or high risk depending on how they look when examined under a microscope.

**Muscle-invasive bladder cancer (MIBC)** – The cancer has spread beyond the urothelium and lamina propria into the layer of muscle (muscularis propria), or sometimes through the bladder wall into the surrounding fatty tissue. These cancers can sometimes spread to lymph nodes close to the bladder.

### Subtypes

- 90% are Urothelial
- 5% are Squamous Cell (caused by chronic inflammation from bilharzia infections or radiation)
- 5% are rare subtypes

## How Bladder Cancer May Spread

These cancers migrate beyond the inside bladder lining to the muscle.

- May spread directly to prostate, urethra, uterus, and vagina.
- Through the lymph glands to lymph nodes in the pelvis.
- Or through the blood to the liver, lungs, bones, and adrenal glands.

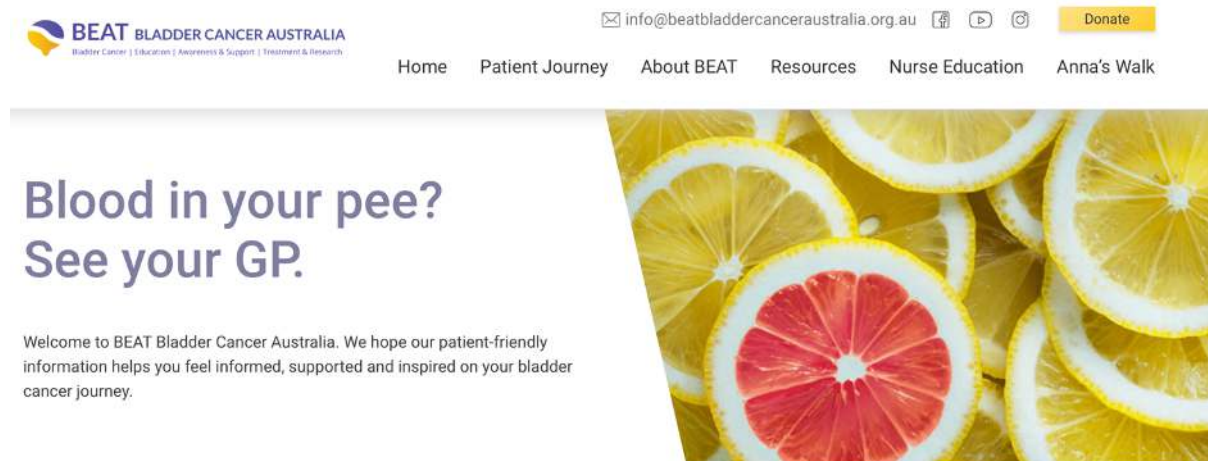
## About BEAT Bladder Cancer Australia

BEAT Bladder Cancer Australia is an Australian charity dedicated to increase awareness of bladder cancer in the community and to provide information, advice and support services to those touched by or working with bladder cancer.

### Key points:

#### 1. Our awareness message:

**Blood in your pee? See your GP.**



#### 2. BEAT website:

Website: [www.beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au](http://www.beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au)

Our website provides helpful information, videos, FAQs and support services available to guide you throughout each stage of the bladder cancer journey.



### 3. Support

**National** monthly support group – via Zoom for all patients and carers/family.

**Last Tuesday of every month. 7.30pm – 9pm AEST**

Each month features an expert guest speaker who provides their professional insights in a facilitated, interactive group discussion. Topics recently covered include: Robotic surgery, oncology, wellness, exercise, nutrition, research and clinical trials

Following the guest speaker, the group engages in discussion, where members can share their feelings and experiences and offer each other support.



### 4. Social Media

Follow us on social media to stay up to date with the latest news and information and to help spread awareness of bladder cancer in the community.



[www.facebook.com/BEATBCAus](http://www.facebook.com/BEATBCAus)



[www.instagram.com/beatbladdercanceraustralia](http://www.instagram.com/beatbladdercanceraustralia)



[www.youtube.com/@beatbladdercanceraustralia](http://www.youtube.com/@beatbladdercanceraustralia)