

## Bladder Cancer Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the purpose of shifting to a new drug after chemotherapy? Do I need to go through chemotherapy again?**

- While chemotherapy is effective for many, after a while, the cancer will begin to return and progress, so adding a maintenance treatment can prolong your life.
- Experts recommend that if there has been no disease progression on chemotherapy after 4-6 cycles of treatment, then maintenance treatment should be started.
- The goal of maintenance treatment is to:
  - Lessen the tumor burden
  - Keep it from regrowing
  - Extend relief from tumor-related symptoms
  - Prolong life and survival

### **Does the maintenance treatment work?**

- Yes, a drug called avelumab has been approved by the FDA because it increased overall survival compared to patients who received best supportive care.
  - Best supportive care includes antibiotics, nutritional support, hydration, pain management, and palliative care.

### **What kind of side effects can I expect?**

- Unfortunately, side effects are a part of cancer treatment. Some are mild, others may be more bothersome.
- Side effects can be different for different patients. In the clinical trials for avelumab, the most common side effects were:
  - Fatigue
  - Joint and back pain
  - Itching
  - Nausea
  - Urinary tract infections
  - Fever
  - Diarrhea

### **Should I call the doctor's office if I have side effects?**

- YES!! Don't tough it out! It is important that you have an open line of communication with your care team, to let them know so they can help you manage the side effects and ensure they don't progress to more serious problems.

### **Should I keep track of little problems?**

- Yes, write things down so that you can share any events with your care team.
- Be suspicious of all side effects or new symptoms because they may be related to your treatment.

# Bladder Cancer Frequently Asked Questions, cont.

## **Is there anyone else I should tell about symptoms?**

- It is important that you share information about your treatment with other doctors and specialists that you see.
- It is important that they know about your treatment because of interactions with other drugs you might take, or if the treatment impacts other disease symptoms.
- If you have side effects, your doctor will contact your other doctors as needed. For example, your primary care physician, dermatologist if you have a skin reaction, or gastroenterologist if you have stomach problems.

## **Will side effects always be managed or is there a possibility that I'll have to stop the treatment?**

- If symptoms are mild (called Grade 1), it is likely that your doctor will continue the treatment while monitoring you very closely.
- If symptoms are more moderate (called Grade 2), your doctor may stop your treatment until they get the symptoms under control, especially lab values. Your doctor may give you corticosteroids to help with symptoms.
- If symptoms are moderately high (called Grade 3), your doctor will stop your treatment and give you high dose steroids. Once the side effects are under control, the steroids will be tapered over -4-6 weeks.
  - In some cases, if symptoms do not improve within 48-72 hours, a drug called infliximab may be given to you.
- If symptoms are severe (called Grade 4), your doctor will stop your treatment.



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