



Bladder Health and Urinary Problems

Key Points

- Drink plenty of water or fluids before and after the days you have drug therapy unless your doctor has told you to cut down on your fluids.
- There are steps you can take to help avoid a urinary tract infection (UTI).
- Frequency, urgency and cloudy urine, or signs of a urinary tract infection or UTI. If you think you may have a UTI, call your doctor immediately.

After your infusion, your body breaks down the drugs and often gets rid of them by excreting them in the urine. The waste from these broken-down drugs can be irritating or damaging to the bladder as the urine passes through it. They can cause inflammation and bleeding. Though rare, it is possible for severe and/or long lasting irritation to lead to permanent damage. Bladder damage is more likely in folks who have had radiation to the bladder or pelvic area, have a history of persistent bladder or urinary tract infections, or have a low platelet count.

Drug therapies that commonly cause bladder irritation include:

- cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan®)
- ifosfamide (Ifex®)
- drugs that are put directly into the bladder such as mitomycin and BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin)

Ask your doctor or clinical pharmacists about the drugs in your treatment plan. Could they cause changes in your urine or your urinary habits? If so, what symptoms do you need to report to your doctor?

Ways to Prevent or Manage Urinary Problems

Your healthcare team will take steps to prevent bladder irritation and damage such as:

- giving you extra fluids through an IV (intravenous)
- giving you a drug called Mesna® (uromitexan) that protects the bladder
- controlling any bladder bleeding that occurs

What You Can Do

- ✓ **Drink!** On treatment days, drink extra fluids before you go and for at least 24 hours afterwards. You want to keep your urine pale yellow to clear. Drink 2-3 quarts/liters of fluid a day – preferably water – unless your doctor restricts your fluids. Stay away from things that can make bladder problems worse such as caffeine, alcohol, spicy foods, and tobacco products.
- ✓ **Prevent urinary infections.** Ask your nurse or doctor about ways you can lower your risk of a urinary tract infection (UTI). Women and the elderly are at higher risk. For someone on cancer drug therapy, a UTI should be treated immediately because it can turn into a very serious problem. Here are some tips to help avoid getting a UTI.
 - Don't hold in your urine - go to the bathroom often.
 - Wear loose pants and cotton underwear. Avoid pantyhose.
 - Take showers instead of baths.
 - When you go to the bathroom, wipe from front to back. Clean with soap and water, if possible.
 - Check with your nurse before using any products near your genitals (talc, creams, and lotions).
 - If you use a catheter, learn how to use it safely so you don't get an infection.



Symptoms of a Bladder or Urinary Problem

- Pain or burning when you urinate
- Cloudy or red/rusty colored urine
- Need to urinate often (frequency)
- Intense need to urinate (urgency)
- Trouble emptying your bladder completely
- Pain above your bladder and/or in your pelvic area
- Bladder spasms or cramps

Questions for your Doctor

- What symptoms or problems should I call you about?
- What steps can I take to feel better?
- How much should I drink each day? What should I drink?
- What foods and drinks should I avoid?