

[Home](#) > [Types of Cancer](#) > [Bladder Cancer](#) > Bladder Cancer - Symptoms and Signs

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Bladder Cancer - Symptoms and Signs [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 06/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

People with bladder cancer may experience the following symptoms or signs. Sometimes, people with bladder cancer do not show any of these symptoms. Or, these symptoms may be caused by a medical condition that is not cancer.

- Blood or blood clots in the urine
- Pain or burning during urination
- Frequent urination
- Feeling the need to urinate many times throughout the night
- Feeling the need to urinate, but not being able to pass urine
- Lower back pain on one side of the body

Most often, bladder cancer is diagnosed when a person tells his or her doctor about blood in the urine, also called hematuria. Gross hematuria means that enough blood is present in the urine to be visible to the patient. It is also possible there are small amounts of blood in the urine that are unable to be seen. This is called microscopic hematuria, and it can only be detected with a urine test.

General urine tests are not used to make a specific diagnosis of bladder cancer because hematuria can be a sign of several other conditions that are not cancer, such as an infection or kidney stones. One type of urine test that can indicate the presence of cancer is cytology, a test in which the urine is studied under a microscope to look for cancer cells. See the [Diagnosis](#) [3] section for more information.

Sometimes when the first symptoms of bladder cancer appear, the cancer has already spread to another part of the body. In this situation, the symptoms depend on where the cancer has spread. For example, cancer that has spread to the lungs may cause a cough or shortness of breath, spread to the liver may cause abdominal pain or jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes), and spread to the bone may cause bone pain or a fracture (bone break). Other symptoms of advanced bladder cancer may include pain, unexplained appetite loss, and weight loss.

If you are concerned about one or more of the symptoms or signs listed in this section, please talk with your doctor. Your doctor will ask how long and how often you've been experiencing the symptom(s), in addition to other questions. This is to help find out the cause of the problem, called a diagnosis.

If cancer is diagnosed, relieving symptoms remains an important part of cancer care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms.

The [next section in this guide is Diagnosis](#) [3], and it explains what tests may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/bladder-cancer/symptoms-and-signs>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18525>