

# The value of EDUCATION



Howard B. Minott, MD  
Physicians Urology

Robinson Memorial Hospital and Howard B. Minott, MD of Physicians Urology believe educating our community about cancer can have a great impact on the future of cancer outcomes in Portage County. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 1.6 million new cancer cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2011. It is important to know what life changes we can make to reduce our risk of developing this disease and what great progress has been made in cancer prevention, treatment and early detection. Of those 1.6 million cancer cases, bladder cancer takes fourth place as the most common cancer. It is estimated that in 2011, 52,000 men will develop bladder cancer in America.

## About bladder cancer

"Bladder cancer is typically more common in men and in people over the age of 55," stated Dr. Minott. In fact, men are three times more likely to get bladder cancer than women, and Caucasians are twice as likely to develop bladder cancer as African Americans and Hispanics, according to the American Cancer Society.

"Bladder cancer is the fifth highest cancer diagnosis at Robinson Memorial Hospital," said Dr. Minott. "We see an average of 25 new diagnoses each year in Portage County."

## Risk factors

While different types of cancers have different risk factors, it has been found that smoking is a great risk factor of bladder cancer. "The best thing that you can do in preventing bladder cancer is to never start smoking, or if you do, try to quit. Even second-hand smoke can impact your chances of developing this disease," said Dr. Minott.

Some people also seem to inherit a reduced ability to detoxify or break down chemicals in the body. Exposure to a class of chemicals (aromatic amines) used in leather, printing materials, textiles, paint products and rubber-making increase this risk.

## Screening

"Bladder cancer is usually detected by blood in the urine," said Dr. Minott. "It is so important to have your primary care physician run a urinalysis at the first sign of blood in the urine, as roughly 80 percent of tumors can be cured if detected early."

## Treatments

The most common treatment is a transurethral resection (TUR). A urologist uses a cystoscope — a slender tube with a lens and light — to examine the urinary bladder. A tool called a resectoscope — a cutting loop — then sheds the tumor and removes the fragments. The TUR is an outpatient surgical procedure, and most patients are functioning regularly within a few days.

"Follow-up testing is very important with bladder cancer as there is a high recurrence rate," stated Dr. Minott. Cystoscopy exams or endoscopies of the bladder are performed over the following five years to watch for any recurrence.

"If people reading this article can take away one key point, it is this: get tested immediately if you see traces of blood in your urine," says Dr. Minott. "While this does not at all mean that you do have bladder cancer, it is a sign that there is some type of problem, and you should get tested. There is so much we are learning about cancer now that we shouldn't ignore any signs our bodies are giving us."

Looking at the graph below, survival data is comparable within the State of Ohio and the National Cancer Data Base; Robinson Memorial Hospital did not have enough bladder cancer cases to display for 2010.

