



Pat Hanlon, kidney cancer survivor

# 'Blood in pee': Briefing for pharmacy teams

## How you can help support the campaign

13 October – 23 November 2014

Last updated: 15 September 2014

**Public Health England will be running a national campaign to raise awareness of blood in urine as a symptom of bladder and kidney cancers. We need your continued support to help improve early diagnosis of these diseases.**

### What is Be Clear on Cancer?

Be Clear on Cancer aims to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of the signs and symptoms, and encouraging people to see their GP without delay.

**What is the main message of the campaign?**  
**If you notice blood in your pee, even if it's 'just the once', tell your doctor straight away**

### What activities will be taking place and when?

Advertising will start on **13 October 2014**, and will include TV, radio, digital (eg YouTube) and out of home (eg washroom posters). There will also be events in public places (eg shopping centres), a schedule for which will be made available on the [NAEDI website](#) once finalised. TV advertising will run until 9 November, while all other communications will end between 9 and 23 November 2014.

### Why are you re-running the national 'blood in pee' campaign?

Early results from the first national 'blood in pee' campaign, which ran in autumn 2013, are promising. Despite this, we want to keep the campaign message at the front of people's minds and there's still a great deal of potential to improve bladder and kidney cancer survival in England.

This campaign will be slightly less intense than the first national campaign. There'll be no direct mail to individual households and the TV advertising will also be a little less intense this year. Check the [NAEDI website](#) regularly for further updates in the run-up to the campaign start date.

### Who is the 'blood in pee' campaign aimed at?

Men and women from lower socioeconomic groups **over the age of 50**, and the people who influence them, such as friends and family.

### Why focus on 'blood in pee'?

Blood in urine (haematuria) is the most common symptom of bladder and kidney cancers. Yet, when asked to name cancer signs and symptoms, only a third of people mention unexplained bleeding.

### Other bladder cancer symptoms include:

- Needing to pass urine very often or very suddenly
- Pain when passing urine.

### Other kidney cancer symptoms include:

- A constant pain below the ribs
- An abdominal mass
- Other more vague symptoms include unexplained weight loss, high temperature, night sweats, a general sense of feeling unwell, or tiredness.

### Who is most at risk of bladder and kidney cancers?

- Age – People aged 50+ account for around 97% (8,600 cases) of those diagnosed with bladder cancer each year, and 90% of all kidney cancer cases (around 7,300 each year)
- Men – bladder and kidney cancers are more common in men, although women are affected too
- Smokers have a much higher risk of developing bladder or kidney cancer, with nearly 4 in 10 bladder cancers, and 1 in 4 kidney cancers estimated to be caused by smoking
- Being overweight or obese accounts for 1 in 4 cases of kidney cancer
- Exposure to certain industrial chemicals – around 7% of bladder cancer cases in men and 2% in women in the UK are estimated to be linked to occupational exposures
- Some other medical conditions, such as kidney disease
- Having a family history of bladder or kidney cancer.

## Is there any evidence the 'blood in pee' campaign will work?

Results from previous 'blood in pee' campaigns to date indicate that Be Clear on Cancer is successfully changing levels of public awareness. There are also early indications that clinical outcomes are improving too. [Initial evaluation results following the first national campaign](#) show:

- Over 2 in 5 spontaneously mentioned blood in pee as a symptom of bladder or kidney cancer (44% up from 27% pre-campaign)\*
- After the campaign there was an increase in people saying they would see their GP if they noticed blood in their pee just once, up from 49% to 55%\*
- 26% increase in two-week wait (2WW) referrals for suspected urological cancer\*†.

The [regional pilot campaign](#) that ran from January to March 2013 in the Tyne Tees and Border TV regions has also shown positive results:

- 48% increase in bladder cancer diagnoses in pilot areas following a 2WW referral\*, compared with a 12.3% decrease in control areas\*
- 47% increase in kidney cancer diagnoses in pilot areas following a 2WW referral\*, compared with an 8.5% increase in control areas.

\* Statistically significant

† Pathway covers several cancer types in addition to bladder and kidney cancers

**'When I told my wife I'd noticed blood in my pee, she said I should see my doctor as soon as possible. I wasn't sure, as it wasn't painful, but I'm glad I listened to her.'**

Pat Hanlon, aged 72, kidney cancer survivor

## How can pharmacy teams support this national campaign?

Since pharmacies are often the first port of call for those suffering with urinary symptoms, you have an opportunity to be vigilant for people who may be showing symptoms of bladder or kidney cancer. Many people find it easier to discuss their worries in an informal pharmacy setting. GPs will be following [NICE guidelines](#), which recommend a referral if:

- haematuria is painless
- the patient is over 40 and has recurrent or persistent urinary tract infections (UTIs) associated with blood in urine
- the patient has blood in urine with no identifiable infection.

**'Lots of people don't realise that blood in pee could be a symptom of cancer, even if it only happens once. The campaign has a really clear message, one which pharmacy teams are in an ideal position to actively reinforce. We need to reassure our customers and help them overcome any fears or worries they might have. Whether finding blood in the urine is a one-off, or something that keeps happening, encourage people to get themselves checked out.'**

Ann Gunning, MRPharmS

## Conducting cancer conversations with customers can be difficult. Do you have any tips?

A Cancer Research UK nurse, who specialises in communicating about cancer, advises:

**'It is important for pharmacists and their teams to feel confident and to try and make cancer a normal part of conversation. For example, if you are worried about someone who has repeatedly bought an OTC medicine for a suspected cancer symptom, you could ask: "What does your doctor say about that?":'**

Some people may be reluctant to visit their GP. Remind customers that their symptom/s may not be anything to worry about, and if they are worried it is cancer, reinforce that getting it diagnosed and treated early can make a big difference. Pharmacy employees who feel uncomfortable talking about cancer should seek the advice of their pharmacist.

## How are GPs and hospitals preparing for the national 'blood in pee' campaign?

NHS Improving Quality will work with Strategic Clinical Networks to help ensure the NHS is prepared for the campaign. There are also additional briefing sheets to support GPs and to help hospital providers plan for anticipated increases in referrals and diagnostic tests.

## Three things you can do

**1 Make it part of your day.** During your regular consultations, such as medicine-use reviews or when selling over-the-counter medicines, be mindful that the people you are talking to may have seen the campaign. It may prompt people who have previously ignored symptoms, or discounted them as a one-off, to ask you about it; they may come to your pharmacy looking for OTC medicines or advice.

**2 Give people confidence.** People can delay going to see their GP and often seek reassurance from other healthcare professionals about making a GP appointment for a sign or symptom they are concerned about. If customers have noticed blood in their urine, whether it's just the once or frequently, alongside a recurring UTI, urge them to visit their GP without delay. If you feel comfortable doing so, tell them to mention that their pharmacist sent them. It may be the encouragement they need to get themselves checked out.

**3 Promote the campaign.** Talk to your friends, family, customers and colleagues about Be Clear on Cancer. By talking about the campaign you will help people to feel more comfortable about sharing details of a sign or symptom of cancer they might be experiencing. Put up posters in your pharmacy and have some 'blood in pee' leaflets readily available for customers.

To order free campaign materials (including accessible versions), visit the [Health and Social Care Publications Orderline](#) or call 0300 123 1002.

## Find out more

- Visit [naedi.org/beclearoncancer/bloodinpee](http://naedi.org/beclearoncancer/bloodinpee)
- Familiarise yourself with the adverts at [nhs.uk/bloodinpee](http://nhs.uk/bloodinpee), the public-facing website
- Visit the [British Oncology Pharmacy Association's E-learning Centre](#) which can help you raise the subject of cancer with patients

## Key facts about bladder and kidney cancer

- If kidney and bladder cancers are diagnosed at the earliest stage, one-year survival is as high as 91–96%. At a late stage, it drops to just 33–42%
- It has been estimated that around 1,000 deaths from bladder and kidney cancers could be avoided each year if survival rates matched the best in Europe