

New treatment for urinary tract cancer could prevent kidney dialysis, transplant

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UC San Diego Health is now offering a new treatment for patients with low-grade upper tract urothelial cancer (LG-UTUC) that could safely avoid removal of the entire kidney, which may prevent the need for dialysis or kidney transplant in the future.

UC San Diego Health administered the first dose of the treatment to a patient in September.

The drug is the first and only U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved treatment for [adult patients](#) with LG-UTUC, a cancer of the urinary system that involves the lining of the kidneys or the tube that connects the kidney to the bladder (ureter).

LG-UTUC can block the ureter or kidney, causing swelling (known as hydronephrosis), kidney deterioration, infections and can even lead to the need for [kidney dialysis](#), or a transplant, in some patients.

"Given many people with this type of cancer are generally older and have other co-morbidities,

there is a significant unmet need for a less invasive treatment option, particularly one that spares the kidney," said Aditya Bagrodia, MD, urologic oncologist at UC San Diego Health.

Using a camera inserted in the bladder, the treatment, known as Jelmyto, is administered by an injection consisting of mitomycin, an established chemotherapeutic, and sterile hydrogel. It is delivered to the region where the tumors are located and kills the [cancer cells](#) by interfering with the DNA machinery.

The treatment is given once a week for six weeks during an approximately 15-minute session.

"This medication offers patients another option that has shown effective results and improvement in [quality of life](#), preventing major life-altering interventions when appropriate," said Bagrodia.

Urothelial cancer is the tenth most commonly diagnosed cancer worldwide, with approximately 573,000 cases diagnosed each year. LG-UTUC is a rare variant of [urothelial cancer](#), with about 8,000 cases diagnosed nationwide annually.

"As the only academic medical center in the region, our patients have access to a wide array of advanced tools, technologies and techniques that are specifically designed to treat complex urinary diseases, such as LG-UTUC," said Christopher Kane, MD, urologist and CEO, UC San Diego Health Physician Group.

"We are thrilled to now offer this treatment to our patients. It shows our dedication to personalized [cancer care](#)."

Provided by University of California - San Diego

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