

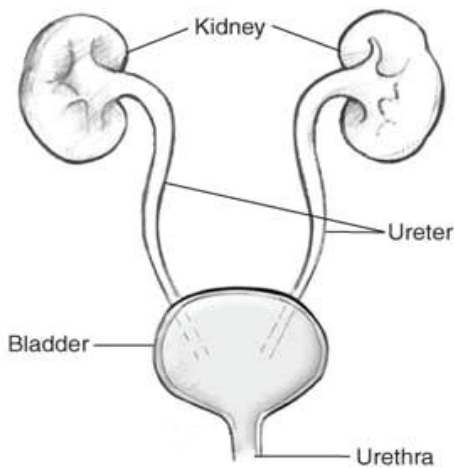
# VCUG

(Voiding Cystourethrogram)

## What is a VCUG?

**Note:** Child-friendly language in blue.

- A study of your child's bladder and the tubes—ureters and urethra—connected to it.
- A VCUG uses a kind of X-ray called fluoroscopy, and special liquid called contrast, to help see inside of your child's body.



## Why is it done?

- It will show the structure of your child's bladder, ureters and urethra, and how they are working.
- It checks for Vesicoureteral Reflux (VUR), which is a possible cause of urinary tract infection (UTI).
- Typically, urine (pee) is made in the kidneys then flows down the ureters to the bladder. Urine comes out when your child urinates. VUR occurs when urine flows backwards up to the kidneys.



Patient in Fluoroscopy Room in Hospital Gown

## What can I do to help my child?

- Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to stay with their child throughout the entire procedure whenever possible. Women who may be pregnant cannot be in the scanner room during the VCUG. In these cases, another trusted adult is encouraged to stay with the child during this time.

# What should I expect during the procedure?

The entire test takes about 30-40 minutes and is done in three stages.

## Stage 1: Getting ready

- First, you will meet the staff who will ask you some general questions about your child's health, and give your child a hospital gown (special picture outfit) to change into.
- Next, the technologist (person who helps take the pictures) will help your child lie down on the camera bed, and will take the first X-ray picture (warm-up picture) of your child's abdomen (belly).
- The nurse will then use cotton balls and betadine (brown soap) to wash the area where your child urinates (pees).
  - \* Some kids say this part feels cold and wet.
  - \* Girls will be asked to make "frog legs" (feet together, knees apart while lying down) to help the nurse see the area to be cleaned. Practicing making "frog legs" at home can help make this part easier.
- The nurse will then insert a catheter (tiny, soft tube) into your child's urethra (the opening where pee comes out) and into the bladder.
  - \* Your child may feel a sense of pressure and/or the urge to urinate.
  - \* Encourage your child to take deep breaths to help make this part easier and quicker.

## Stage 2: Pictures

- The radiologist (picture doctor) will move a large camera above your child, and begin taking pictures. Colorless contrast (special water) will flow through the catheter into the bladder, so the radiologist can clearly see the structure and function of the bladder.
  - \* Your child will eventually feel a strong urge to urinate.
  - \* Encourage him or her to hold their urine as long as possible by taking more deep breaths.

## Stage 3: Going to the bathroom

- When your child can no longer hold their urine, he or she will be asked to urinate while still lying down under the camera. The radiologist will take a few last pictures while your child urinates.
  - \* A bedpan or urinal (special potty/toilet) will be provided to your child based on age and gender.
- After all of the pictures are taken, the technologist will gently slide out the catheter.



Technologist and Patient in Fluoroscopy

- Results will be sent to your doctor in 1-2 business days.

**Note: Please ask us about planning your child's VCUg with mild oral sedation (3 years and older)**

# Tips for preparing your child for a VCUg



## Infants (0-12 months old):

- Remember you are the most important thing to your child. Your presence will help them feel as safe and secure as possible.
- Take care of yourself too. If you are prepared mentally and physically, you will be more relaxed around your child.
- Bring familiar objects that comfort your child such as a favorite blanket, toy or pacifier.
- Remember that children use many different ways to cope. Crying is a healthy and normal way for children to cope because it allows them to express their emotions.


## Toddlers (1-3 years old):

- Begin preparing your child the day before.
- Use simple words to describe what your child may experience.
- Tell your child they will have some pictures taken so the doctor can learn more about his or her body.
- Let your child know that a doctor or nurse will be touching the area where they go pee, and that it is okay.
- Reassure your child that you will be close.
- Bring comfort items with you that help your child feel safe, such as a favorite toy or blanket.
- Toddlers are learning to be independent and make their own choices; offer them realistic choices. For example, “Which stuffed animal should we bring?”

## Preschoolers (3-5 years old):

- Begin preparing your child about 1-3 days in advance.
- Talk to your child about why they are having pictures taken. For example, “The doctor wants to take special pictures of the part of your body that helps you go to the bathroom.”
- Let your child know that to help them get ready for the pictures, a nurse will gently place a tiny, soft tube into the opening where they go pee.
- Talk about ways to make the “tube” part easier, such as pretending to blow out birthday candles, or counting.
- Let your child know they will be asked to go to the bathroom while lying down under the big camera.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

## School Age and Up (6 years old and up):

- Prepare your child at least a few days in advance.
  - Talk to your child about why the doctor wants to take special pictures of inside his or her body. For example, for younger children, “So the doctor can learn more about how your body works.” For older children, “So the doctor can learn whether you have reflux or not.”
  - Explain to your child what he or she might see, hear and feel, in the order things will occur, using child-friendly and/or real terms depending on your child’s age/preference.
  - Talk to your child about different ways to cope. Some children like to know everything that is happening; others want to direct their attention elsewhere. Remind them that either way is okay.
  - Encourage your child/teen to ask questions.
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## My questions for the Radiology staff ...

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### Child Life

Children's National Medical Center Department of Radiology is staffed with two full-time Child Life Specialists at Children's National Medical Center Main Campus, and one full-time Child Life Specialist at Children's National Imaging Montgomery County Regional Outpatient Center. Child Life Specialists are trained to address the emotional and developmental needs of children and their families during healthcare experiences, and can provide procedural preparation and support before and during your child's exam.

### Phone Numbers

- If you would like to speak to a Child Life Specialist before your child's Radiology appointment at Children's National Medical Center Main Campus, please call **202-476-3338**.
- If you would like to speak to a Child Life Specialist before your child's Radiology appointment at Children's National Imaging Montgomery County Regional Outpatient Center, please call **301-765-5727**
- For more information about hospital-wide Child Life Services at Children's National Medical Center, please call **202-476-3070**.

*Children's National Medical Center supports the Image Gently campaign and strives to keep radiation exposure to our patients as low as possible. For more information on this campaign, please visit [www.imagegently.org](http://www.imagegently.org)*

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