

Getting a VCUG

Voiding Cystourethrogram



What is a VCUG?

- A VCUG is an imaging study that takes pictures of the urinary system using a special kind of X-ray (fluoroscopy) and liquid (contrast).
- A VCUG displays the structure of your child's bladder, ureters, and urethra and how they are working.

What happens during a VCUG?

Part 1: Getting ready

- Your child will take off all their clothes and change into a hospital gown.
- Your child will then lie on their back on the table.
- Infants and toddlers will have a belt that goes over their belly to help keep them still.
- Your child will either lie in a frog leg position (feet together, knees apart) or with their legs straight out.
- The radiologist will then clean the area where your child pees from. Some kids say this feels cold and wet.
- The radiologist will then insert the catheter (small, soft tube) into your child's urethra and into their bladder. Your child might feel some discomfort, but it will go away quickly.
- The radiologist will tape the catheter in place.
- Once the catheter is in place your child can straighten their legs.
- While the catheter is being inserted a caregiver may stand next to their child and encourage them to take deep breaths.

Part 2: Taking the pictures

- The radiologist will move a large camera over your child and start taking pictures.
- Your child's bladder will fill up with the contrast, which allows the radiologist to see the function and structure of your child's bladder.
- The radiologist will take photos with your child flat on their back and on their left and right side.
- During the pictures, a caregiver may stand at the head of the bed and hold their child's hands.

Part 3: Going to the bathroom

- When your child's bladder is full, the radiologist will ask your child to pee while lying on the table. Your child will have the urge to pee. A bedpan or urinal can be provided if needed. Your child will have special towels under them to help soak up the liquid.
- The radiologist will take pictures while your child pees and when their bladder is empty. Then the radiologist will remove the catheter.
- The test will take about 30 minutes.

To schedule a preparation/education session:



A child life specialist (CLS) can help support your child during their VCUG by explaining it in developmentally appropriate language, suggesting possible coping strategies, and helping to distract them during the test. If you would like to speak to a child life specialist prior to your child's radiology appointment, please email radiologychildlife@mountsinai.org



**Mount
Sinai**

*Kravis Children's
Hospital*

How can I prepare my child?

Be sure to follow the prep instructions given to you when you schedule the appointment.

Infants (up to 12 months old)

- Bring comfort items such as a pacifier, blanket, or favorite toy. You may bring a bottle of milk or other liquid which may be offered for additional comfort.
- Remember crying is a healthy and normal way for infants to express their emotions.
- You are your child's biggest comfort.

Toddlers (one to two years old)

- Start preparing your child the day before with simple words.
- Tell your child that they will have pictures taken so that the doctor can learn more about their body.
- Tell your child that a doctor will touch the area where they pee and that it is okay.
- Reassure your child that you will be there for the pictures.
- Toddlers want to be independent and make their own choices, so you can ask them what comfort items they will bring.

Preschoolers (three to five years old)

- Start preparing your child one to three days before.
- Tell your child why they are having the pictures taken. You can relate it to any symptoms they might be experiencing.
- You can tell your child that to help get ready for the pictures, a radiologist will place a very small, soft tube into the opening where their pee comes out.
- Have your child practice the positions for the catheter insertion at home.
- Let your child know that they will be asked to pee on the table so that the doctor can learn more about their body.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

School age and up (six years old and up)

- Prepare your child at least a few days in advance.
- Tell your child why they are having the pictures taken. You can relate it to any symptoms they might be experiencing.
- You can review the first section of this flyer with your child to help prepare them for the test.
- Talk to your child about different ways they can cope including if/how they want to be distracted and if they want to be told what is happening each step of the way.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

How can I help as a caregiver?

- Caregivers are encouraged to be with their child during the scan, though there are some exceptions. Women who may be pregnant cannot be in the fluoroscopy room during the procedure.
- You can encourage your child to take deep breaths and squeeze your hands when the catheter is inserted. The more relaxed your child is the less discomfort they should feel.
- We encourage caregivers to help contribute to a calming environment as your child will look to you for emotional cues.
- During the pictures you can help distract your child with a show on a tablet, reading a book, or talking with them.



**Mount
Sinai**

*Kravis Children's
Hospital*