



Getting ready for your  
**VCUG**



St. John's  
Hospital

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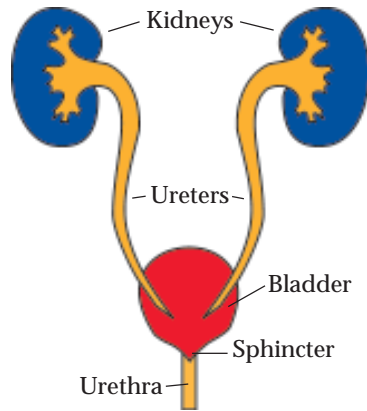
*Cover illustrations by Helen Stannard, Springfield, Illinois.*

# Getting ready for your VCUG

You are scheduled to have a **Voiding Cystourethrogram\*** or **VCUG** for short at St. John's Hospital. This test is done in the **Radiology Department** of the hospital. Special pictures called **X-rays** will be taken to help your doctor know how your **bladder** is working. It also tells the doctor about the tubes that connect your bladder to your **kidneys**. These tubes are called **ureters**.

This booklet will let you know what to expect on the day of your VCUG. If you think of questions about your VCUG as you read this book, be sure to write them down so you don't forget them. Bring this booklet with you on the day of your test so we can answer all of your questions!

## Urinary System



### \*Note to parents:

*The information in this booklet describes a Voiding Cystourethrogram. This information does not replace information given to you by physicians, radiology technologists and other members of your child's healthcare team.*

*If you have any questions about the VCUG or how to prepare your child for this test, call the Child Life Specialist at 217-544-6464 ext. 44949.*



## The day of your VCUG

On the day of your VCUG, the adult that you bring with you is welcome to stay with you through the whole test. This could be your mom or dad, grandma or grandpa or an aunt or uncle. (Note: women who are pregnant are not permitted in the room during imaging.) You can also bring a special toy like a teddy bear, doll or blanket to hold during your test, or your favorite CD or tape to listen to.

When it is your turn, a **technologist** will bring you and the adult that came with you to a room with a few big machines. These machines are just big cameras that take special pictures. You will also see a bed that people sometimes call a table. The camera above the bed is connected to special TV screen. This shows the doctor the pictures as they are being taken. Let the doctor know if you would like to see your pictures too!

You may notice a tall pole with a bottle of clear liquid hanging at the top. The clear liquid is called **contrast** and it helps your pictures turn out clear.

## What will happen during my VCUG?



There will be several people in the room to help with your test. The adult you brought with you, a nurse, a technologist and a doctor will all be there to help you. There may be a *child life specialist* with you to help too.

First you will need to change into a hospital shirt. You will need to take off your pants or skirt and underwear so they don't get wet. We have a bathroom where you can change.

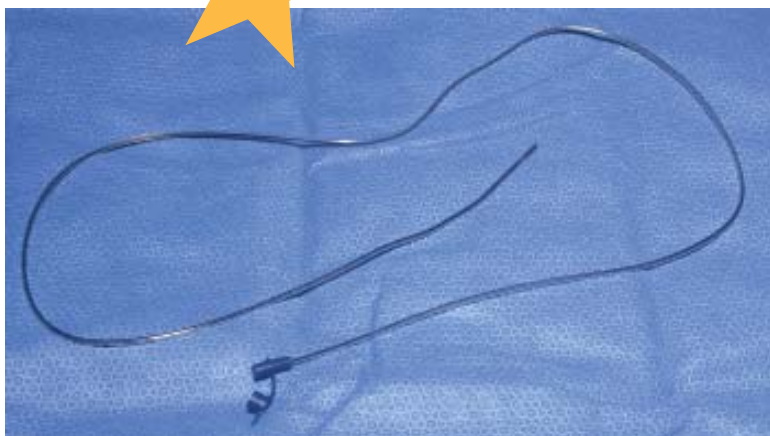
Then you will be asked to climb up on the bed. You can put your head on a pillow and lie on your back. If you would like a blanket to cover your legs, just ask!

The nurse will ask girls to place their legs in the frog position. To do this, bend your knees and put your feet close to your bottom, then let your knees relax out to the side. Boys will lie with their legs out in front of them.

The nurse will wipe off your private area between your legs with some brown liquid soap. The nurse or technologist may call this *betadine*. This may feel cold and wet. This soap cleans you off. It is important for you to keep your hands above your belly button after they clean you off until the end of the test.

Next, the nurse will slide a small, thin, bendable tube called a *catheter* along the path inside your body that your urine or pee takes from your bladder to the outside of your body. The opening where the nurse puts the catheter is called a *urethra*. Some kids say that when this tube goes in it feels like a pinch or that it stings a little. Be sure to tell us how you thought it felt. Once the catheter is in place, the nurse will gently tape it to the inside of your legs with soft tape, so it does not slip out.

## A Catheter



### Try to relax

You can help the catheter go in a little easier by relaxing your muscles as much as possible. We have a few ideas that may help you relax. You can practice these things at home while lying on your back or in the frog position. Pick the one that works best for you!

- 1. Blowing bubbles.** Slowly take a deep breath in and then very slowly pretend you are blowing a big bubble. Go slowly; you don't want the bubble to pop! We will have real bubbles that you can blow when you come for your test.
- 2. Singing or counting.** Practice singing your favorite song or counting as high as you can.
- 3. Reading.** Bring your favorite book with you and have someone read it to you during your test. Some kids really love the *ISpy* books we have at the hospital.



If you have other ideas of things that help you feel relaxed, let us know! We will do whatever we can to help you during your test. We know that this is probably something new to you and new things are sometimes scary. It is okay if you let us know how you are feeling or if you need to cry.

Besides relaxing your muscles, it is also important for you to lie still while the nurse is putting in the catheter. The technologist or the adult that is with you can help you remember to be still. Later, when the doctor is taking the pictures, you may have to roll from side to side. We will let you know when we need you to move, and we will help you.

### **Time for the pictures**

Once the catheter is in place, your doctor will come in and meet you and it will be time for the contrast or clear liquid that helps us see your pictures better. The contrast will drip from the bottle at the end of your bed through the tube or catheter in your bladder. As this happens, you may feel like you have to go to the bathroom. We need you to hold it for as long as you can so the doctor can take more pictures. When you think that you can not hold it any longer, tell the doctor.

The technologist will take the tape off your legs and gently slip the tube out of your bladder. Then, the doctor will ask you to go to the bathroom while you are lying on the bed. It will feel like you are going to the bathroom, but really you are just letting the contrast come out. The technologist will make sure that you have something to go to the bathroom in so you don't get too wet. As you are emptying your bladder, the doctor will take a few more pictures, so remember to lay still!



**Contrast**

# You're done!



After your bladder is empty and all the pictures are taken, you are done! You can go to the bathroom, wipe off any of the contrast material that may be on you and change into your clothes. You should feel very proud of yourself, because ***YOU DID IT!***

Some kids say that it tingles or feels warm the first few times they go to the bathroom after their VCUG. The doctor says this is okay and that feeling will go away soon. You can drink lots of your favorite drinks to make the feeling go away even faster!





## Glossary



***Betadine:*** A brown liquid soap used to clean you before the VCUG.

***Bladder:*** The place in your body that holds your urine or pee until you go to the bathroom.

***Catheter:*** A small, thin, bendable tube that gives your bladder the contrast.

***Child Life Specialist:*** A person who will talk to you about your test and help you to relax and be comfortable during your visit to the hospital.

***Contrast:*** Clear liquid that looks like water; when it is inside your body, it helps us see the X-ray pictures easier.

***Kidneys:*** You have two kidneys. Kidneys clean waste (stuff your body doesn't need) from the inside of your body and turns it into urine or pee. Your body gets rid of waste by going to the bathroom.

***Radiology Department:*** The place in the hospital where X-rays are taken and where your VCUG will be done.

***Technologist:*** A person who goes to school to learn how to take X-rays; this person will help you during your VCUG.

***Ureters:*** Tubes that connect your kidneys to your bladder,

***Urethra:*** The opening in your body where urine or pee comes out.

***Voiding Cystourethrogram:*** (VCUG for short) Pronounced Voy-ding Sis-toe-you-wreath-row-gram.

***X-ray:*** A picture of the inside of your body



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the VCUG or how to prepare  
your child for this test, call the  
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