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NOTE: Words that you see in **BOLD** print might need to be looked up in the dictionary we've included on page 9.

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You are scheduled to have a **VOIDING CYSTOURETHROGRAM** (**VCUG** for short). This is a test 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**.

We thought you should know what happens when you have a VCUG. The best way to explain this is to go step by step. If something is going to be a little different when you come in for your VCUG, the **STAFF** will explain. Tell them that you have read this booklet, so they know what you are expecting! As you read this with your parents write down any questions you have. Bring your questions to the hospital. We'll be sure to answer them all before we start your VCUG.

Your parent will stay with you through the whole test (unless your mother is pregnant; if this is the case, you may bring another adult to keep you company). You may bring a special toy like a teddy bear, doll, or blanket to hold during the VCUG.

Some boys and girls like to wear their own shirt during the test, others like to change into a hospital top. You will need to take off your pants or

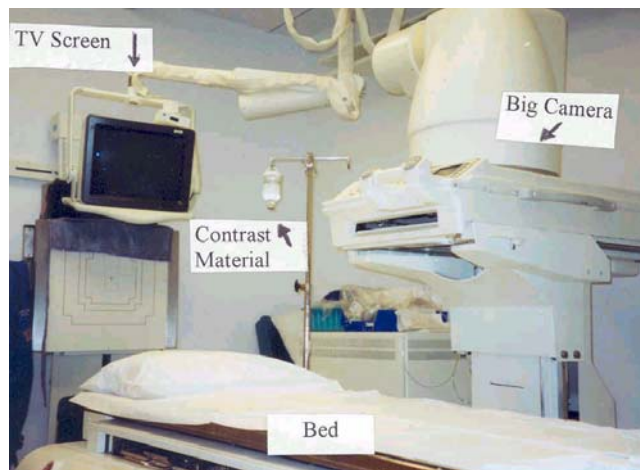
skirt, and underwear (so they don't get wet).

When you are ready and it is your turn a **TECHNOLOGIST** will bring you and your parent to a room with a few big machines. These machines are just big cameras that take the special pictures! There will be a bed, some people think it looks more like a table. The cameras are connected to a TV screen so that the doctor can see the pictures as they are being taken. Let the doctor know if you would like to see your pictures on the TV screen, too!

You might notice a tall pole with a bottle of clear liquid hanging at the top. The clear liquid is called **CONTRAST MATERIAL**. This liquid will help the x-ray pictures be clear. We'll talk more about this later, but it works kind of like invisible ink!

There will be several people in the room with you. Your parent, a nurse, a technologist, and a doctor will all be there to help you.

This is a picture of the room where you will have your VCUg:



You will be asked to climb up onto the bed (someone might need to help you). You will lie on your back. If you would like a blanket to cover yourself, just ask!

Next, the nurse will need to slide a small thin tube called a **CATHETER** along the path (inside your body) that your **URINE** (pee) takes from your bladder to the outside of your body. The tube is very much like a spaghetti noodle. The opening where the nurse puts the catheter is called a **URETHRA**.

Before the nurse can put in the catheter, they will ask girls to place their legs in the frog leg position. To do this, bend your knees and put your feet close to your bottom, then stick your knees out to the side. Boys will just need to lie flat on the bed. See the pictures below:



Position for Girls



Position for Boys

The nurse will then clean the private area between your legs with some

orange or pink soapy liquid. It may feel very cold and wet. This makes the area extra clean. It's important not to touch anything below your belly button after they clean this area, until the end of the test.

Putting the catheter in may be uncomfortable. The nurse will help the tube go in easier by putting some very slippery gel on the tube. When you get to the hospital ask to feel the gel to see how slippery it is! For boys, the nurse can place a little numbing gel on the tip of your penis, it helps you not feel the catheter as much. Unfortunately, this gel is not helpful for girls.

Once the catheter is in place, the nurse will loosely tape the catheter to your leg so it doesn't slip out.

It will also help a lot if you can try to relax your muscles as much as possible. To help you understand, try this little experiment:

Make one of your hands into a fist; squeeze your hand shut as tight as you can. Now, with your other hand, try to push a finger in-between the fingers making the fist. It's not easy, is it!!

Next, loosely hold your hand in a fist (your muscles are more relaxed this way). See if your finger fits between more easily this way.



Tense hand



Relaxed hand

You might be wondering how you would be able to relax during your VCUG. We've listed a few ideas that might help. Practice these things, maybe while you are lying flat or in the frog leg position. See which one makes you feel more relaxed.

1. Blowing bubbles: slowly take a deep breathe in, then very slowly pretend you are blowing a really big bubble. Go slowly, you don't want the bubble to pop! You may need to pretend to blow more than one bubble while the nurse puts in the catheter.
2. Singing: Practice singing some of your favorite songs...don't leave out any of the words!
3. Reading: Bring a book you really love, have Mom or Dad read it to you (or read it to them!) during the test. Other kids have said Where's Waldo and I Spy books are very helpful.

You might have your own ideas for helping yourself through this test. Let us know your ideas, we will try to do whatever we can to help. We realize this is new and different and maybe a little scary. Let us know how you are feeling. We think it's ok to cry, too.

The other thing that is important for you to do during the test is hold still when the nurse is putting the catheter in, and when the pictures are being taken. The nurse, doctor, or technologist will let you know when it's most important for you to hold still. Sometimes your Mom, Dad or a staff person

can help you hold still.

Once the catheter is in place, it will be time for the contrast material we mentioned earlier. This is the liquid that will help the doctor see your pictures better. This fluid will go from the bottle through the tube (catheter) and into your bladder. As this happens you might feel like you have to use the bathroom. When you don't think you can hold another drop tell the doctor. They will then ask you to hold the contrast material in your bladder for a few more seconds while the doctor takes a couple of pictures (x-rays).

Look at the two pictures below. One is a x-ray with Contrast Material one is without. Can you see how it helps the doctor see better? In the picture without the contrast material, it's hard to see where the bladder is. In the picture with contrast, you can see the bladder (it's labeled), and the kidneys and ureters.



Without Contrast

With Contrast

Then, believe it or not, the doctor will ask you to let the contrast material come back out of your bladder! Right onto the table! It will seem like you

are going to the bathroom, but really you are just letting the contrast material come out. While you are emptying your bladder, the catheter will slip out, too. The doctor or technologist will make sure there are towels under you, so that you don't get very wet. As this happens, the doctor will take more pictures of your bladder emptying. This is how the doctor can see how your bladder works! It is important to lie very still while the pictures are being taken, so that they don't come out blurry.

After all the pictures have been taken, you're finished!! You can wipe off any contrast material that might have spilled on you during the test (it feels like water). Then you can put your underwear and clothes back on, and go home or back to school. You should feel very proud of yourself, because **YOU DID IT!**

Some kids tell us it tingles or feels very warm the first few times they go to the bathroom after their VCUG. The doctor says this is normal and "OK". Don't worry that feeling will go away soon.

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# **My VCUG Questions:**

*Remember to bring this with you to the hospital!*

# DICTIONARY

**VOIDING CYSTOURETHROGRAM (VCUG for short):** Pronounced voy-ding Sis-toe-you-wreath-row-gram

**RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT:** The place in the hospital where x-rays are taken, and where your VCUG will be done.

**X-RAY:** A picture of the inside of your body.

**BLADDER:** The place in your body that holds urine (pee) in-between the time you go to the bathroom.

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

**URETERS:** Tubes that connect your kidneys to your bladder.

**TECHNOLOGIST:** A person that goes to school to learn how to take x-rays. They will be taking your x-ray pictures.

**CONTRAST MATERIAL:** Liquid that looks like water. When it is inside your body it helps the x-ray pictures turn out clearer, so the doctor can see them better.

**CATHETER:** A small, thin, soft tube that is about the size of a spaghetti noodle. The doctor uses the catheter to put contrast material into your bladder.

**URETHRA:** The opening in your body where urine (pee) comes out when you go to the bathroom.

**STAFF:** The people that work at the hospital like the doctor, nurse and technologist.