

# Getting ready for the test: Voiding Cystourethrogram (VCUG)



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[www.bcchildrens.ca](http://www.bcchildrens.ca)

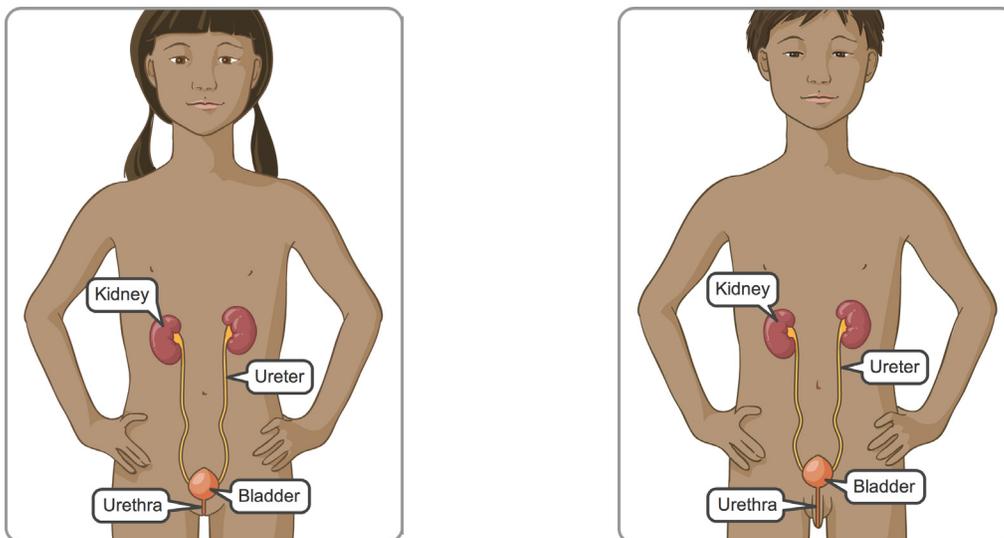
If you and your child know what will happen during the **voiding cystourethrogram** or VCUG the test will go more smoothly. When you are informed and relaxed, you are more able to comfort and support your child.

## What is a VCUG?

The VCUG test shows what happens inside your child's body as he or she pees. The x-ray doctor, called a radiologist, will look to see whether urine flows backwards from the bladder to the kidneys. This condition is called reflux. Your child's doctor may have asked for this test because your child has had bladder or urinary tract infections (UTIs).

A VCUG uses x-ray pictures so the doctor can see your child's bladder, kidneys and the tubes that connect them, called ureters. An x-ray dye is put into the bladder through a small tube called a catheter. This tube is inserted by a nurse.

You may stay with your child during the test. If you are pregnant, you may stay in the room behind a shield. It can be helpful to have someone come with you to support your child during the test.



Images courtesy of AboutKidsHealth.ca

## How to prepare and support your child

- Be honest with your child.
- Explain to your child what happens during the test. This helps all ages of children. Use safe words to explain the test such as "insert" and "place" rather than "poke" and "shove." The test requires your child to pee on the x-ray table into towels. Children that are potty trained often find this difficult. We suggest that you tell your child that it is part of the test and nothing to be shy about. It may help her or him to know the test is over once she or he pees.
- Bring a comfort item from home, such as a soother, blanket, small toy.
- Bring a friend or family member with you for support.
- Write down any questions you or your child have so you can ask them when you come.

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## What will happen during the VCUg?

- You will check in at the front desk of the Radiology Department.
- You will help your child change into a hospital gown.
- You will bring your child into the x-ray room when your name is called.
- The exam will be described again to you and your child. You may ask the technologist any questions you may have.
- Your child will lie flat on the x-ray table. Girls will have their legs in a “frog position” with knees out to the side. Boys will have their legs straight and resting on the table.
- Comfort your child with a soother, blanket, or favourite toy.
- Talk calmly with your child to help him or her relax.
- A nurse will clean your child’s genitals with cotton. This will feel cold and wet.
- The nurse will then place a long, narrow, soft plastic tube called a catheter through your child’s urethra into the bladder. Some kids say this feels like a pinch or a scratch.
- The nurse will tape the catheter in place.
- The doctor will move the x-ray camera over your child’s body. It will not touch your child.



### The radiologist and Paige the puppet ready for her VCUg

- The technologist will begin the flow of x-ray dye into your child’s bladder through the catheter. As your child’s bladder fills, your child may feel the urge to pee.
- The doctor will take x-ray pictures to see the bladder filling.
- After your child’s bladder is filled, the doctor will ask your child to pee on the x-ray table into towels. This will be easier for your child if he or she is relaxed.
- The doctor will take x-ray pictures of the bladder as it empties.
- The test will be over after your child pees.
- The tape will be removed to allow the catheter to slide out.
- The technologist will tell you when your child may get dressed.

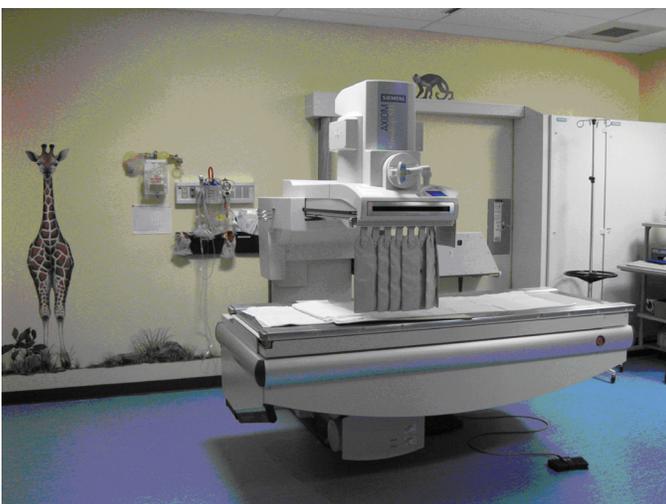
### After the VCUg

The test results will be sent to your doctor.

Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids for a couple of days after the test.

It is normal for your child to have:

- pink pee
- mild stinging while peeing for the first few times after the test.



X-ray machine

**Contact your child's doctor if your child has:**

- pain
- fever
- blood in the pee.

**How to prepare and support your child****Before coming:**

- Be honest with your child.
- Go to "About Kids' Health" on the BC Children's website to learn how the body works: [www.aboutkidshealth.ca/BCCH/En/HowTheBodyWorks/KidneysandBladderOverview/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/BCCH/En/HowTheBodyWorks/KidneysandBladderOverview/Pages/default.aspx).
- Bring comfort items such as a soother, blanket, or small toy, or a small container of bubbles.
- Make a coping plan with your child such as deep breathing, singing songs, or blowing bubbles.
- Think of some soothing thoughts to share with your child before or during the test.
- Bring another adult with you.

**During the exam:**

- Use your child's coping plan.
- Offer your child choices when you can.
- Speak calmly to your child.
- Remember: if you are relaxed, your child is more likely to relax!
- Let us know how we can help!

**After the exam:**

- Talk to your child about the test.
- Praise your child for the things he or she did well, such as staying still or breathing deeply during the test.

**Have questions or concerns?**

The staff at BC Children's Hospital is here to help you and your child to make your visit go smoothly.



Call the Radiology Department at:  
604-875-2345 x 2132

**It's good to ask!**