

Learning About Your Child's Voiding Cystourethrogram (VCUG) Test

A voiding cystourethrogram or V-C-U-G takes X-ray pictures of your child's kidneys; the tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder, called the ureters; the bladder; and the tube that lets urine out of your child's body, called the urethra.

Before the test, be sure to follow your doctor's directions for preparing your child, including when your child should stop eating and drinking.

Call your doctor if your child has symptoms of a urinary infection, such as burning when they urinate.

If there's a problem, you may need to wait for your child to have the test.

Watching your child have this test can be stressful for you.

But if you can find ways to relax yourself and feel calm during the test, it can help your child feel better.

Talk to your doctor about things you can do to help your child relax and feel more comfortable.

And ask if you can bring a favorite toy or a blanket to help comfort your child.

Some hospital care teams include a child life specialist.

If yours does, this person can help you and your child understand your child's health condition, prepare for the test, and get emotional support.

Your child will put on a hospital gown or scrubs and take off any jewelry.

The area is cleaned and then a thin, flexible plastic tube called a catheter will be placed into the opening of the urethra.

This can be uncomfortable.

But the doctor will be as quick and gentle as possible.

A liquid that has a dye called contrast material will be added to the catheter.

It will make your child's bladder feel very full.

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But it helps the bladder show up clearly in the X-rays.

After X-rays are taken, your child will want to urinate and will be asked to urinate into a bedpan or towel.

You might need to assure your child that it's okay.

While your child is urinating, more X-rays are taken.

As your child urinates, the catheter will usually slip out.

Or someone on the care team will remove it.

The test usually takes about 20 minutes.

And you may be able to go home right away.

At home, your child may have some mild burning when they urinate or after they urinate.

So encourage your child to drink fluids, like water or milk.

Small amounts at a time may work best.

Some kids may be nervous about getting a V-C-U-G.

Depending on your child's age, it may help to talk with them about the test so they know what to expect.

The care team will be there the whole time to make sure your child is okay and as comfortable as possible.

And the most reassuring thing for your child is that you'll be there.