

VCUG Voiding Cystourethrogram

What is VCUG:

A VCUG is an x-ray imaging study of the bladder. The images demonstrate the contour of the bladder and urethra. If your child has backwash of urine (vesico-ureteral reflux), this will show up on the pictures.

Some children have already undergone this study and have bad memories of the experience. If the study is done by a Pediatric Radiologist or a qualified technician, it should not be a terrible experience. We make every effort to make the study as easy, comfortable and least stressful as possible.

What to expect:

Your child will be escorted to the x-ray suite and asked to undress. He/she will lie upon a special x-ray table with a large camera above. There are many monitors and unusual pieces of equipment in the room. Your child's genitals will be cleaned and a small catheter will be placed through the urethra into the bladder. This can be uncomfortable for a moment but is not very painful. The mental anxiety of this procedure far outweighs the actual physical discomfort.

After the catheter is placed, a clear liquid is put into the bladder through the catheter. This liquid (iodinated contrast) appears on the fluoroscopic x-ray images as black. You and your child will be able to see the bladder filling. The amount of radiation during this study is small, and every effort is made to minimize the dosage. Sometimes, two voiding-cycles are necessary. While your child urinates, the catheter is removed.

Very few children require sedation for this procedure. A general anesthetic or complete sedation cannot be utilized, since the child needs to be awake and cooperative during the study. The radiologist will decide with you, if your child needs sedation.

If your study is going to be done at UC Davis and you would like to speak with the radiology staff before the appointment, please call (916) 703-2100, one to 3 days before the appointment.