

Nuclear Voiding Cystogram



What is a nuclear voiding cystogram?

A nuclear voiding cystogram is a test that shows your child's bladder and ureters and how they work. We will put a small amount of liquid tracer (radiopharmaceutical) into your child's bladder through a small, soft tube called a catheter. After the tracer is in your child's bladder, we take detailed images.

How do I prepare my child for the test?

Explain what will happen during the test to your child before you come to the hospital. Tell them that there are no shots or needles needed for this test.

If your child is a baby, you may want to bring a bottle of formula or juice with you for after the scan. Also you may bring a pacifier, blanket or special toy to help calm your child.

We have videos your child can watch or they can bring their favorite DVD from home to watch during the scan.

How do we check in for the appointment?

Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Being late can affect other appointments and can delay your appointment. If you will be late, please call Radiology at 206-987-2089.

Check in at the level 6 registration desk inside the Ocean entrance. After you complete registration, we will direct you to the Radiology reception area.

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To Learn More

- Radiology
206-987-2089
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



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What happens during the test?

We will give your child a hospital gown to put on and have them lie on the scanning bed. We will use sheets or towels to cover your child for privacy.

A nurse or technologist will clean the opening where your child's pee comes out and then slide a catheter (a small tube) into your child's bladder through that opening. A small piece of tape will hold the catheter in place.

Your child will need to lie still while the catheter is placed and during the images. It is often hard for young children to hold still for this. Our staff will assist and support your child in holding still.

While your child is lying on the bed, a technologist will be taking images using a large camera under the bed.

The tracer will flow through the catheter and fill your child's bladder. It can be seen on the images. There are no side effects from the tracer.

If your child is potty-trained, when their bladder is full, we will help them get ready to pee while sitting on a bed pan. We will move the camera from under the bed to an upright position. We will help your child sit on the bed pan with their back up against the camera while peeing.

If your child is not potty-trained, we will fill your child's bladder with the tracer and they will pee on a diaper.

After your child pees and all of the images have been taken, the catheter will be removed.

This test usually lasts about 30 minutes. Parents may stay with their child during the entire test. You can hold your child's hand, talk to them and comfort them. Please make other arrangements for siblings.

Does the nuclear voiding cystogram use radiation?

Yes, your child will be exposed to a small amount of radiation. We understand that radiation dose is a special concern for children. To reduce how much radiation your child is exposed to, we tailor the nuclear voiding cystogram based on your child's age, weight, and area to be tested.

If you have questions about the exam and whether it is needed, please contact the doctor who ordered the cystogram for your child.

What happens after the test?

We will clean your child with washcloths and towels, and then they can get dressed again. Your child may return to normal daily activities.

After having a urinary catheter, your child's urine may look pink the first time they pee. This is caused by a small amount of blood in the pee. This is normal, but if it lasts longer than 24 hours, or if your child has a hard time peeing, call your child's primary care provider.

Give your child extra fluids to drink so that they go to the bathroom more often. This will help with any irritation or burning sensations that can happen after having a catheter.

The images from your child's radiology procedure are commonly reviewed by a radiologist within 24 hours and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test. If you have a clinic or doctor appointment scheduled, the doctor will review the results with you then. If you do not have a visit scheduled, you should call your child's doctor for the results.