

Patient Information

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctors or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

What is a micturating cystogram (MCU)?

MCU is a test that makes it possible to look at your child's bladder using contrast liquid under x-ray vision. There are many reasons why your child may need this test. The most common is proven urinary tract infection in young children.

What is contrast?

Contrast is a clear liquid containing radiopaque substance which makes the bladder and kidneys easier to see with x-rays. All the contrast passes out of the body very quickly in the urine.

What happens in MCU examination?

The MCU is a test carried out in one of the Diagnostic Imaging Departments of Southern Health at Monash Medical Centre, Dandenong Hospital or Casey Hospital. In this examination, a series of x-ray film are taken of your child's bladder and kidneys.

The test is performed in a room with a high metal table and a large camera above it. The camera is linked to a television screen where an x-ray image of the bladder, kidneys and ureter can be observed.

The nurse will lay your child on the table and you are asked to stand at the top of the x-ray table and hold his/her hands. (*Mothers: you should not stay with your child if you are or could be pregnant.*) The doctor or nurse will clean your child's groin with antiseptic solution. Local anaesthetic gel is placed on the end of a tiny plastic tube, called a catheter, or the anaesthetic gel is injected into the penis in boys or urethra in girls. The top of the catheter is passed into the bladder. This makes her/him feel a little discomfort and may upset your child. It is important that you reassure and comfort your child.

The catheter is then connected to the bag of contrast liquid, which is hung by the side of the table. As the bladder fills, the contrast liquid makes the bladder look like a black balloon on the TV screen and a series of x-ray films are taken in different positions. Once the bladder is full, x-rays images of the kidneys and bladder are taken. Pictures are also taken as it empties. The filling up and emptying of the bladder may be repeated during the examination.

Special nappies are placed under the child while he/she is emptying his/her bladder. It is important that you explain to them that they pass urine on the table since this is an important part of the test. A urinary bottle or bedpan may be given to the toilet-trained or older child.

As the contrast fluid flows out of the bladder, the tube will be taken out without your child noticing. Once the bladder is empty, and the test is finished your child will be cleaned and dressed. The doctor checks the pictures and the examination is complete.

Advice for Parents

- When booking an appointment, please mention whether your child has a heart condition so that special arrangements can be made.
- It is very important that your child is not suffering from a urinary tract infection for the **2 weeks prior** to the test.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids for **24 hours after the test** so as to flush the bladder.
- Your child may be a little sore when they go to the toilet for the rest of the day, but this sensation will go away quickly.
- Urine might be bloodstained in the 24 hours following the test, but it will return to normal.
- If your child is unwell, with symptoms such as a fever, continuous bloodstained urine or blood clot, you should take your child to see your GP or attend the Emergency Department.

R E M E M B E R

- Your child will feel more comfortable if a parent or carer stays with them during the examination.
- Women who are pregnant should not stay in the room while the x-rays are being taken.
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“Respect, communication, involvement”

The staff in Diagnostic Imaging want to make sure that you have understood the information that we have provided personally, as well as the information contained in the information sheet. We believe your understanding about why and how we are planning to assist you is very important.

Approved by Director November 2004.

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