

## Cystogram

### *How to prepare and what to expect*

*This handout explains how a cystogram works, how to prepare, what to expect, and how to get your results.*

### **What is a cystogram?**

A *cystogram* is an exam of the bladder and lower urinary tract. During the exam, X-ray pictures are taken of the bladder and the *urethra* (the tube that carries urine out of the body).

One type of cystogram is called a *voiding cystourethrogram* (VCUG). If you are having a VCUG, X-rays will also be taken as you empty your bladder. A VCUG shows if there are any problems in your urine flow.

### **How does the exam work?**

- A *catheter* (small, flexible tube) will be placed in your urethra.
- Your bladder will then be filled with *contrast* (X-ray dye). Contrast helps details show more clearly in the X-ray images.
- After your bladder is full, the catheter may be taken out.
- Small amounts of X-rays are passed through your body. Pictures of the inside of your body will show on a monitor.
- You do not need to have *sedation* (relaxing medicine) for this exam.

### **How do I prepare?**

- Tell your provider about:
  - Recent illnesses or other medical conditions
  - Allergies you have to medicines, especially if you have ever had a reaction to contrast
- *Women*: Tell your provider if there is any chance you are pregnant.
- Do not wear jewelry or clothes with snaps, zippers, or other metal.



*Talk with your referring provider about the results of your cystogram.*

## What can I expect?

- We may ask you to change into a gown and remove your undergarments.

## How is the exam done?

- The radiology technologist will help you get into position on the table.
- One or more pictures will be taken of your pelvic area before you receive the contrast.
- A nurse will clean your genital area with antiseptic soap and then place the catheter into your urethra.
- The catheter will be connected to a bottle of contrast. The contrast will drip into your bladder until it is filled.
- The radiologist and the technologist will use a special X-ray machine called a *fluoroscope* to watch your bladder as it fills. They will be able to see if any of the contrast goes backward into one or both *ureters* (the tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder).
- When your bladder is full, the technologist will help you get into position. The radiologist will take a series of images with the fluoroscope.
- After the exam is done, the catheter may be removed.
- If you are having a VCUG (voiding cystourythrogram):
  - A series of X-rays will be taken as you empty your bladder.
  - After you are done, a final X-ray is taken to see how well your bladder has emptied.

## What will I feel during the exam?

- A cystogram or VCUG does not cause pain. But, you may feel some discomfort when the catheter is placed and your bladder is filled with contrast. You may feel like you need to urinate as your bladder fills.
- When your genital area is washed, the antiseptic soap may feel cold.

## Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A *radiologist* is a doctor who is skilled in reading radiology exams. A radiologist who is trained to interpret cystograms will review your X-rays and send a report to your primary care or referring provider. The radiologist will talk with you about your X-ray images.

Your own provider will give you your results. You may also read your results on your eCare Results page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call Radiology Records at 206.598.6206.

You and your provider will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Imaging Services: 206.598.6200

HMC Imaging Services: 206.744.3105