

# **Micturating Cysto-urethrography (MCU)**

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact: The X-Ray Nurses  
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Radiology Department  
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## **Information**

This leaflet tells you about the procedure known as a Micturating Cysto-urethrography (MCU); it explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. We hope this leaflet will help you and your child to understand the procedure. Please feel free to discuss the information with your paediatrician.

### **What is an MCU and why does my child need one?**

An MCU is an X-ray procedure that shows the anatomy of the ureters and bladder, and how well they are working.

The ureters are the thin tubes that carry urine from the kidneys into the bladder. Usually, when urine reaches the bladder, it is prevented from flowing back up the ureters to the kidneys by valves in the wall of the bladder. Some children however are born with leaky valves that allow urine to flow back. This condition is called reflux. If reflux is present it shows up on the X-ray, either when the bladder is filled or when the child passes urine.

In some babies and children, the test is used to see if there is an obstruction of the flow of urine from the bladder.

### **What does an MCU involve?**

A thin plastic tube called a catheter is passed through your child's urethra into their bladder. Local anaesthetic is used but most children still find this uncomfortable. It only takes a few seconds and the rest of the MCU is usually painless.

Your child's bladder is then filled with contrast media (a colourless liquid that shows up on X-ray pictures) which is passed through the catheter. X-ray pictures of the bladder and ureters are taken before, during and after your child empties their bladder.

You are encouraged to stay with your child and to assist during the examination, although you will not be allowed to stay if you are or might be pregnant.

Please note that as we have no crèche facilities available, you are asked not to bring other children to the X-ray department.

## What is the preparation for an MCU?

Antibiotics need to be taken by your child to prevent an infection after the test.

1. If your child is not already taking preventative antibiotics, please speak to the secretary of your child's paediatrician for further advice. **Your child should be prescribed a three-day course of antibiotics to start the day before the MCU.** Please take exactly as prescribed by the doctor.
2. If your child is already taking antibiotics to prevent a urinary tract infection, additional antibiotic needs to be taken to prevent an infection developing after the test. The most commonly used preventative antibiotic is called Trimethoprim, which is usually taken once a day at night time. **For extra protection for the MCU give twice the usual dose the night before the test and for the following two nights.** After this go back to the usual dose your child was taking before the test. If your child is taking a different antibiotic, please ask your doctor for advice.
3. In certain circumstances, as all babies and children are different, intravenous antibiotics may be required. If so, you will be contacted beforehand by the paediatric team to arrange this in the children's ward prior to the procedure.

If you are uncertain about these instructions, please speak to your GP/health visitor or ring the hospital to speak to your child's paediatrician. If your child has a urine infection at the time of your appointment, please contact the X-ray appointment team on 01904 726676 to rebook your appointment.

## Are there any alternatives to an MCU?

Unfortunately, for young children, the only way of confirming reflux or obstruction of flow from the bladder is by an MCU. Both these conditions are potentially serious but treatable. Your paediatrician will explain in detail any treatment that is required in clinic.

## Who has made the decision that my child should have an MCU?

The paediatrician looking after your child feels that an MCU is the best thing to do to give you the most accurate information about what is wrong and decide on the most appropriate treatment.

Therefore our, paediatric radiologists have been asked to do this examination for your child. You will have the opportunity to discuss this examination with them prior to the procedure and if after this discussion you do not want your child to have the MCU you can decide to cancel it.

## Other preparation

Your child may eat and drink normally before the test. If your child is still a baby, it is a good idea to arrange the feeding times so that they are hungry when you arrive in the X-ray department. They can then be fed just before the MCU, and they are more likely to sleep through it.

If your child is older, please go through this information sheet with them and explain to them what will happen. Children like to know what to expect and it is better to be honest and say “it may hurt a little bit but not for long” than to promise it will not hurt at all.

The X-ray equipment is quite large and may be daunting for your child, but it will not hurt them. We hope the picture of the X-ray room and equipment will help to familiarise you and your child with what you will see.



## **What are the risks of MCU?**

There is a small risk that your child may develop a urinary tract infection after this procedure; however, the increased antibiotic doses given before and after the procedure should prevent this.

The paediatrician and radiologist have taken into account the small risk from the use of X-rays and have decided that the benefit of having an MCU outweighs this small risk.

## **When will I hear the results of the MCU?**

Usually, you will be given information about the test results at your next outpatient clinic visit. However, if the test shows that a change in your child's treatment is needed you will be contacted sooner by letter or phone.

You should not change your child's treatment - do not stop the usual preventative antibiotics, unless you are specifically advised to do so by your paediatrician.

## **Finally ...**

This leaflet should have answered some of your questions, but this is only a starting point for discussion about your child's treatment with the paediatrician looking after them. Make sure you satisfy yourself that you have received enough information about your child's examination before agreeing to proceed.

If you have any queries, please telephone the X-ray appointment clerks on 01904 726676. If they are unable to help you, they will put you through to someone who can.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: Paediatric Radiologist Team, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726674.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net)

An answer phone is available out of hours.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Leaflets in alternative languages or formats**

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: [www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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