

Patient information factsheet

Capsule endoscopy

You have been given this factsheet to help you understand what's involved in a capsule endoscopy. If you have any further questions, a member of the endoscopy team will be happy to discuss them with you.

What is a capsule endoscopy?

It's a type of endoscopy procedure which involves swallowing a small capsule (about the size of a large pill or a cod liver oil capsule) with a tiny camera, battery and transmitter inside.

It takes digital images of the inside of your digestive system every two seconds for twelve hours.

These are transmitted wirelessly from a sensor belt worn around the waist and stored on a recorder carried in a bag over your shoulder.

What is it used for?

A capsule endoscopy is used to examine the small intestine (between the stomach and large bowel). It can be useful in the detection of conditions such as unexplained bleeding, iron deficiency anaemia, Crohn's disease, coeliac disease, leaking blood vessels (angiodyplasia), polyps or tumours in the small bowel.

Preparation

A nurse will telephone you before your appointment to carry out a pre-procedure assessment. You will be asked about your medical history and any medications you are taking.

If you are taking iron tablets, you will need to stop taking them five days before the test.

It is important that you follow the instructions below carefully.

The day before the procedure

You may eat normally until 2pm. After this you should have clear fluids only (clear soup, tea and coffee without milk, herbal teas, juices such as apple or cranberry, and water) until you go to bed.

On the day of the procedure

- Do not eat anything in the morning, but drink plenty of water.
- Do not take any medication in the morning, but bring it with you.
- Wear loose fitting clothes – for example skirt / trousers and blouse / shirt.

During your appointment

The doctor or nurse will explain the procedure to you and you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have. You will be asked to sign a consent form giving your

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permission to go ahead. This is to make sure that you understand the risks and benefits of the procedure.

A sensor belt will be placed around your abdomen. The recorder (which is roughly the size of a Walkman/CD player) is wirelessly attached to the belt and will be put in a small bag which you will carry over your shoulder.

The capsule will be removed from its container and you will see it flashing. You will then be asked to swallow the capsule with a cup glass of water.

A blue light will be visible on the recorder. This lets us know that it is receiving images from the capsule.

What happens after the procedure?

Once you have swallowed the capsule, you return home where you may carry on with your normal activities. The device will continue to take images from inside your body.

You are free to move about, but avoid strenuous activity that may cause sweating or jerky movements and don't let anything hit against the recorder.

Remember that the recorder is a small computer and should be treated with care.

Avoid using laptops or other Wi-Fi equipment in close proximity to the recorder.

You will be given a mild laxative to drink at home. This helps to clear stools from your bowels and will help to ensure that good quality images are obtained.

You should not feel anything as the capsule passes through your intestines but we encourage you to drink plenty of water regularly during the test.

You will be able to remove the recorder and sensor belt after 12 hours. Place them in the bag provided and return this to the endoscopy unit by 10am the next day.

The capsule should pass from your body naturally the following day when you go to the toilet. It does not need to be retrieved and so you can flush the capsule.

It stops recording images as soon as it leaves your body.

What are the potential complications?

The capsule is usually passed from your body naturally, but in rare cases it can get stuck if there is a blockage in your intestine.

What to look out for

If you develop severe abdominal pain or vomiting, contact the endoscopy unit on **023 8120 3186** between 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

After 6pm or at the weekend, contact or go to your nearest emergency department.

Make sure you tell them that you have a capsule in your bowel.

You should avoid having an MRI scan or going through airport scanners for two weeks after this procedure.

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What happens to the recorded images?

The images will be uploaded onto the recording system and read by the doctor in the next few days. They will then be stored confidentially as part of your medical records.

Your results and any necessary treatments will be discussed with you at your next appointment.

Useful links

NHS UK website

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Endoscopy/Pages/How-is-it-perfomed.aspx

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**