

Patient information factsheet

Capsule patency

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

What is a capsule patency test?

It's a method of checking the small bowel for possible strictures (narrowings) which could prevent the passage of a video capsule.

It involves swallowing a small capsule (about the size of a large pill or a cod liver oil capsule) which is designed to pass down the small bowel. An abdominal x-ray the following day will show if the capsule has passed through the small bowel safely.

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.

The nurse will provisionally book a formal video capsule appointment and book the patency capsule for the week before.

The patency capsule and laxatives will be sent to you by post with instructions about when to take them.

It is important that you follow the instructions below carefully.

On the day of the procedure

You can eat and drink normally and take all normal medications.

You will need to swallow the capsule at 7am (unless instructed otherwise).

You will need to take two laxative tablets at 9pm unless you have already seen that you have passed the capsule.

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

On the day after the procedure

You will have your abdominal x-ray the next day.

- X-ray location: Main x-ray department, C level, Southampton General Hospital
- X-ray time: 2pm

You can check in at x-ray reception.

Patient information factsheet

After the x-ray has been done, you can return to normal activities.

The capsule endoscopy nurse will ring you later in the afternoon to confirm if the formal video capsule procedure can take place.

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 have severe abdominal pain or begin to vomit, 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.

What if the capsule doesn't pass on its own?

If you have a narrowing of your bowel, the capsule may not pass of its own accord, and may cause a temporary obstruction. However, the interior of the capsule is designed to absorb liquid from the bowel and will 'melt/dissolve' by itself. The outer cover will flatten which allows it to pass through the narrowing.

If the capsule does not pass of its own accord, you may need to stay in hospital for a short while to manage your symptoms until it dissolves.

Useful links

NHS UK website

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

For a translation of this document, or a version in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk**

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