

---

## CAPSULE ENDOSCOPY

### 1. What is a Capsule Endoscopy?

A capsule endoscopy is where a pill sized video capsule is swallowed. The capsule slowly travels through your digestive system, the same as food would normally travel. This capsule is disposable and usually passed within 24 to 48 hours.

The capsule has its own built-in light and camera to take pictures of the inside of your small bowel. 2 - 4 images are taken per second for up to 8 hours. The images are transmitted to a radio recorder (a walkman like device) that is worn around your waist. You should not remove the belt at any time during the procedure.

This procedure is safe, easy to do, non-invasive and permits examination of the entire small bowel that is not easily reached by other imaging methods.

It does not require sedation as the procedure is painless.

The capsule procedure does have some limitations in that it can only view what the problems may be. It does not allow any treatment such as removing a polyp. A further endoscopy procedure or surgery will be required for this.

### 2. Will there be any discomfort? Is any anaesthetic needed?

No. The capsule is approximately the size of a large antibiotic capsule, so this is similar to swallowing a mouthful of food.

### 3. What are the risks of this specific procedure?

There are risks and complications with this procedure. They include but are not limited to the following.

**Common risks and complications** include:

- About 1 person in every 100 will have difficulty passing the capsule. This can be due to a narrowing (stricture) due to a tumour, inflammation or scarring from previous surgery. This is not usually serious in the short term, but endoscopy or surgery may be needed to remove it.

**Uncommon risks and complications** include:

- Missed polyps, growths or bowel disease.
- Incomplete study of the small bowel due to slow bowel function.

**Rare risks and complications** include:

- Death as a result of this procedure is extremely rare.

### 4. Preparation for the procedure

Iron tablets need to be stopped at least 7 days before your procedure.

It is vital that your stomach is empty during the procedure to ensure a clear view.

---

No food for 10 hours and no fluids are to be taken at least 4 hours before you swallow the capsule.

No food for a further 4 hours after swallowing the capsule.

#### **5. What if the doctor finds something wrong?**

Your doctor will discuss with you any findings after the images from the capsule are downloaded and looked at on a computer.

#### **6. What if I don't have the procedure?**

Your symptoms may become worse and the doctor will not be able to give you the correct treatment without knowing the cause of your problems.

#### **7. Are there other tests I can have instead?**

There are other tests that can be done, such as x-rays, scans or small bowel endoscopy. Capsule endoscopy generally provides an accurate view of the entire small bowel not always possible with these other tests. Your doctor will discuss options with you.

#### **8. What can I expect after a capsule endoscopy?**

The capsule passes naturally with your bowel movement. You should not feel any pain or discomfort.

#### **9. What are the safety issues?**

You should not have an MRI scan whilst the capsule is inside you. Normally the capsule passes in 24 – 48hours.

Notify the hospital Emergency Department straight away if you have;

- any abdominal pain.
- nausea and vomiting.
- black tarry motions or bleeding from the back passage (more than ½ cup of blood).
- a fever.