



Capsule endoscopy

Information for patients from the Endoscopy Unit

This leaflet is for patients attending the Endoscopy Unit for a **capsule endoscopy**. You have been advised to have this procedure so that we can get a better look at your small bowel to help us find out what is causing your current symptoms and discuss your treatment options.

Why do I need a capsule endoscopy?

There are many reasons you may have been referred for a capsule endoscopy. These include:

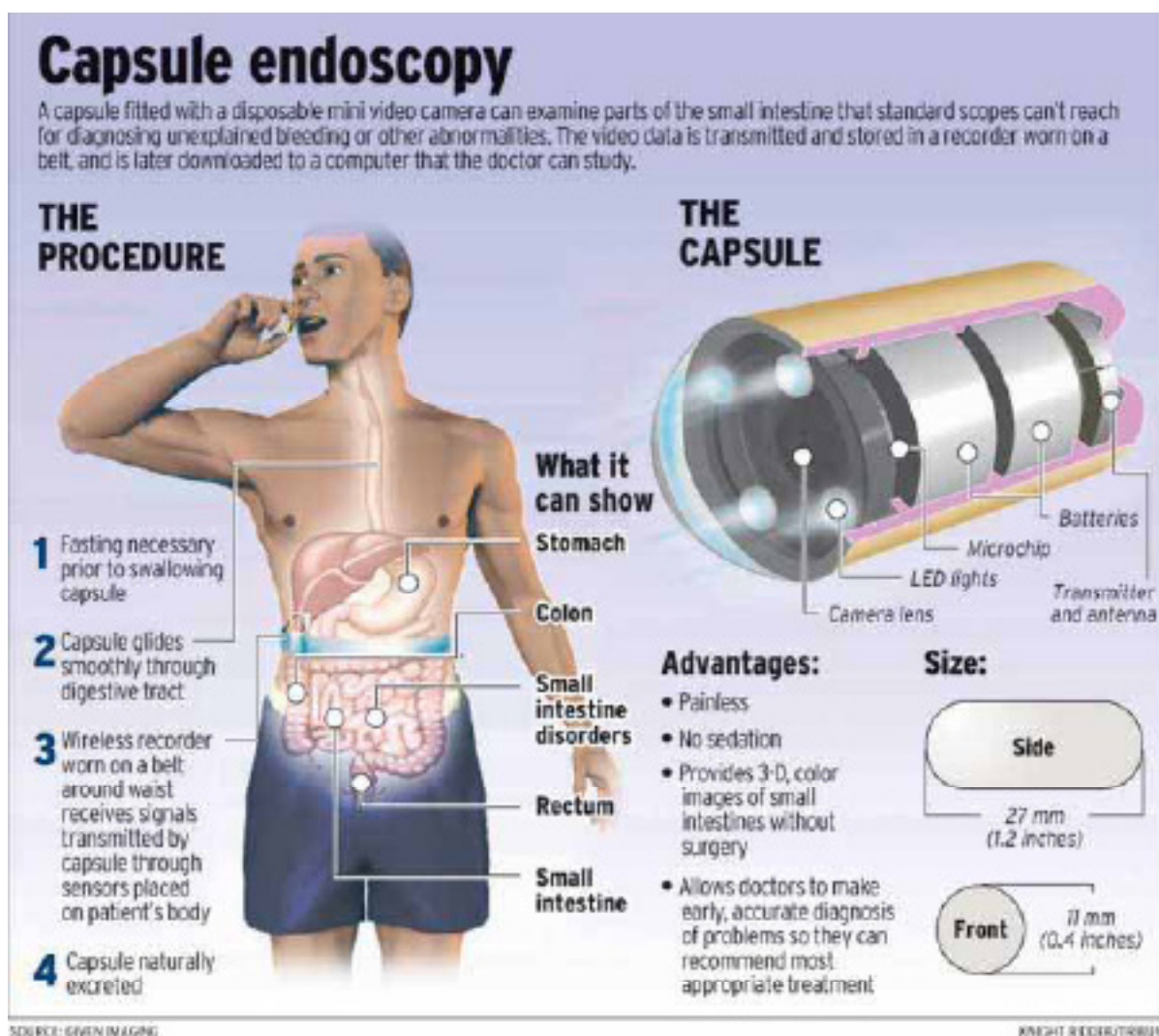
- iron deficiency anaemia
- bleeding from an area not reachable by a standard endoscopy
- checking the clinical importance of abnormalities found on previous barium studies/scans you have had; or
- checking a pre-existing condition for example Inflammatory Bowel Disease.



What is a capsule endoscopy?

This test is an accurate way of looking at the lining of your small bowel. The procedure involves swallowing a small capsule (about the size of a large vitamin tablet). The capsule will then pass naturally through your digestive tract (see diagram below).

As it travels through your small bowel the capsule will take approximately 50,000 images. During the test you will wear a comfortable sensor belt which is positioned around your abdomen (stomach); the size can be adjusted and secured with velcro straps. The sensor belt is attached to a small data recorder box, which is supported in a shoulder bag. The capsule transmits the images it captures to the sensors. They are then stored in the data recorder (see diagram).



Will I have to stay in hospital?

The procedure normally takes eight hours to complete but you do not need to remain in the Endoscopy Unit all day. On the day you will be given a time to return to the Unit and on your return the equipment will be removed.

Are there any alternatives?

Capsule endoscopy is usually used when other methods such as gastroscopy, colonoscopy, and CT/MRI scans have failed to provide specific information about your small bowel. Alternatives like double balloon enteroscopy involves passing a long endoscope down into your small bowel which may not be tolerated by all patients. The type of test you have will be decided after discussion between you and your consultant.

Is there anything I can do before I come into hospital to improve the capsule examination?

For this test to be successful your stomach and small bowel have to be totally empty.

The day before your capsule endoscopy

1. Eat your normal diet until 1pm.
After 1pm: only clear fluids are allowed until 10pm. Examples of clear fluids are: water, apple juice, grape juice, tea or coffee without milk, herbal teas, clear fizzy drinks such as Sprite, Lucozade, clear jelly, and ice lollies (not red).
2. After 10pm: you should be nil by mouth - nothing to drink and remember continue without anything to eat until you have had your procedure the following morning and further dietary instructions have been given. Only essential medication may be taken with a small amount of water. Please contact the Endoscopy Unit if you are unsure.

If you are a smoker, please do not smoke 24 hours before your arrival time. Do not chew gum.

What will happen when I arrive at hospital?

The day of your capsule endoscopy

1. Do not eat or drink anything except necessary medications. If you take medications, take them at least two hours before your arrival time (with a small amount of water) or postpone taking them until four hours after you swallow the capsule.
2. You will be greeted by a nurse who will ask you a few questions, discuss the procedure with you, and remind you that there is a small risk of the capsule causing an intestinal obstruction. You will be asked to sign a consent form at that time. If you have any questions please feel free to raise them here.
3. Your nurse will then apply the belt to your abdomen and fit you with a bag to carry the data recorder. You will then swallow the capsule with water mixed with medication which prevents air bubbles.
4. Please, if possible, dress in loose fitting clothing, ideally two piece clothing as this makes it easier when attaching the sensor belt.

After swallowing the capsule

1. Please only have sips of water until 2pm, when you can have a light lunch (such as a sandwich, soup, or egg on toast). If you did not take your usual medication at 6am before you swallowed the capsule you can also take this now, unless you are told otherwise.
2. If you are a smoker, you cannot smoke until the data recorder is removed following your procedure.
3. Please be very careful with the data recorder. Protect it from water. Do not bang it and avoid sudden movements. Do not disconnect the data recorder from the belt or take off the data recorder belt. During your procedure, avoid strenuous activity and do not bend or stoop since this may interfere with the transmission of images from the capsule to the data recorder. If the data recorder disconnects from the sensor belt do not reconnect. Please contact the Endoscopy Unit immediately on 01227 78 30 58 and speak to the nurse in charge.

4. During the eight hour procedure check every 15 minutes that the light on top of the data recorder is blinking twice per second. If it is not blinking at this rate, record the time on your "Events Form" and tell the Endoscopy Unit at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital on 01227 78 30 58 and speak to the nurse in charge.
5. You will be given a "Capsule Endoscopy Events Form" by your nurse. Please use this form to record the time that you eat, drink, or experience any unusual sensations during your procedure. If you notice any changes in the data recorder, please note this (for example blinking light stops flashing, changes colour, sounds heard).

If you suffer from any abdominal pain, nausea (feeling sick), or vomiting during this time, call the Endoscopy Unit at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital on 01227 78 30 58 and speak to the nurse in charge.

6. You will also be asked to sign an "Equipment Record Form" when you leave the department wearing the equipment. When you have returned the equipment you will need to sign again.
7. Do not go near to electromagnetic fields, for example MRI scanners or radio transmitters, until after you have passed the capsule in your stool (faeces). This is due to metal parts in the capsule. If you have an MRI scan appointment this may need to be postponed.
8. Please return to the Kent and Canterbury Hospital Endoscopy Unit promptly at 5pm in order for the data recorder to be removed.
9. Once the test is completed you may start eating and drinking as normal. The capsule is normally passed in your bowel motion 24 to 72 hours after swallowing. It can be flushed away safely down the toilet.

What about my medication?

Please bring a list of the medication(s) that you currently take with you to this appointment.

If you take oral iron tablets then these should be stopped one week before your appointment. Avoid codeine or codeine-containing painkillers, such as Co-Codamol and Dihydrocodeine, for one week before your capsule examination. Paracetamol based painkillers may be used instead. Your GP will be able to suggest alternatives if you have difficulty.

If you have diabetes please contact the Endoscopy Unit at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital on 01227 78 30 58 and speak to the nurse in charge.

Are there any risks or complications with having a capsule endoscopy?

Although complications may happen, they are rare. The capsule passes through your digestive tract and is eliminated naturally, although it may take up to two weeks in some people. The capsule may get stuck (impacted) if there are any tight narrowings (strictures) in your bowel which may need surgery or if possible removal with an endoscopy procedure. The risk of capsule impaction is around one in 100.

Will additional procedures be necessary?

Some patients are unable to swallow the capsule and so would need the capsule to be placed using an endoscope. This cannot always be arranged on the day of a failed test as we would need to arrange an endoscopist and allocate procedure time. Therefore you may need to return to the Unit on another day.

How will I feel after my procedure?

This procedure is non-invasive. You can drive as soon as you leave the department. If you feel at all unwell at home contact the Endoscopy Unit.

When/how will I receive my results?

As soon as the images are read, you will be sent a letter to arrange an outpatient appointment with your referring consultant to discuss your results. A copy of the report will also be sent to your GP.

Contact details

If after reading this leaflet you have any further questions, please contact the Endoscopy Unit at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital on 01227 78 30 58 and speak to the nurse in charge.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation