

This booklet has been written to give you an indication of what to expect when you have a capsule endoscopy. Reading it will help you make an informed decision in relation to agreeing to the investigation.

Why do I need to have a capsule endoscopy?

You have been advised to undergo this investigation of your small bowel to help find the cause of your symptoms, thereby facilitating treatment, and if necessary to decide on further investigations.

There are many reasons for this investigation including:-

- Iron deficiency anaemia
- You may have bleeding from an area not reachable by conventional Endoscopy.
- To assess the clinical importance of abnormalities found on CT or MRI scans.
- To assess a pre-existing condition e.g. Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

What is a capsule endoscopy?

This test is an accurate way of looking at the lining of the small bowel. The procedure involves swallowing a small capsule (about the size of a large vitamin pill). The capsule will then pass naturally through your digestive tract. As it travels through your small bowel the capsule will take approximately 50,000 images. You will need to wear a sensor belt which is positioned around your abdomen. The belt is then attached to a small data recorder box which is supported in a shoulder bag.



The capsule transmits the images it captures to the sensor belt and these are then stored in the data recorder. The procedure normally takes 8 hrs to complete but you do not need to remain in the department 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.

What alternatives are there?

You will probably already have had other investigations that have been inconclusive which is why a capsule endoscopy has been requested.

Preparation:

Before you take the bowel preparation please contact the unit on 01633 234225 for further advice if you are a diabetic, pregnant or have a pacemaker.

For the test to be successful it is necessary to have clear views of your small bowel which is why you need to take the bowel preparation sent to you. Please follow the instructions enclosed with the preparation.

It is important that you do not have anything to eat after 10pm on the evening before your test. Sips of water only may be taken after this time but please stop 2 hours before your appointment.

What about my medication?

If you take oral **Iron** tablets then these should be stopped.

1 week prior to your appointment.

You should be able to continue on any other medication but if you are unsure then please contact the unit.

How long will I be in the endoscopy department?

Initially you can expect to be in the unit for up to an hour as we complete your assessment and set up the equipment. You will need to return at a time arranged by the nurse in order to remove the equipment, but this will be a brief visit.

What happens when I arrive?

Please wear loose 2 piece clothing on the day e.g. jogging bottoms and a T shirt or skirt/trousers with elasticated waist.

When you arrive in the department you will be met by a qualified nurse who will ask you a few questions in order to complete a medical assessment. During this time the nurse will ensure that you have understood what is involved in the procedure and discuss any concerns or questions that you may have. You will also be asked to sign a consent form.

The Investigation

The nurse will place the sensor belt around your abdomen and then this will be connected to the data recorder box (see images). Before you swallow the capsule the nurse will give you a small amount of a medication that will help to disperse any air bubbles in your small bowel. You will then be asked to swallow the capsule with a small amount of water.

Once you have swallowed the capsule you may leave the unit.

The nurse will give you a time to return and instructions about when you can eat and drink. If you have had to travel some distance it may not be possible for you to go home so you are welcome to stay in the unit. Please be advised that if you do wish to stay in the unit we cannot accommodate relatives/friends who may have accompanied you. Note that the hospital is situated close to the city centre (about 10 mins walk). Whilst wearing the equipment you should take due care and attention to avoid any accidental damage.

Risks of the procedure

Capsule endoscopy has few risks or complications associated with it.

However:-

- Some patients may not pass the capsule naturally. This is commonly referred to as having a retained capsule or capsule retention. This could *very rarely* result in surgery to remove the capsule and to assess the possible cause.
- If the bowel preparation has not fully worked the images the capsule captures may be inadequate.
- Sometimes the procedure is incomplete because the capsule has not reached the end of the small bowel during the 8 hour procedure.

- There is also a *very rare* risk of capsule aspiration (the capsule entering the lungs) while patients are attempting to swallow the pill camera.

Some patients are unable to swallow the capsule and so may require it to be placed endoscopically. 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.

The nurse will be able to inform you about what to expect if this happens to you.

General points to remember

If you are unable to keep your appointment please notify the endoscopy department as soon as possible.

The hospital cannot accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property during your time on these premises.

Discharge instructions following a capsule endoscopy.

Once the equipment has been removed you will be discharged from the unit (this is usually 8 hours after you have swallowed the capsule). You can then eat and drink normally. The capsule normally passes naturally anytime over the next few days and can be disposed of by flushing it down the toilet.

It is very rare for a capsule endoscopy to cause any complications. However, if you cannot be certain that you have passed the capsule and are experiencing severe stomach discomfort, abdominal bloating, nausea or vomiting or any symptom *unusual* to you then you should seek urgent medical advice. In this instance you may need to contact your GP or attend your local hospital. You may also contact the endoscopy unit on: 01633 234225 for advice between the hours of 0800-1700 Monday - Friday.

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If you do not think you have passed the capsule and it has been at least **2 weeks** since your procedure then please contact us (**not** your GP) on the above number and we will be able to advise you. Some patients require an x-ray of their abdomen to confirm if the capsule has either passed or is retained.

Please be advised that a retained capsule is very rarely classed as a medical emergency.

IMPORTANT - You should not have an MRI scan unless you have passed the capsule.

The results from your procedure will be forwarded to your GP and the consultant who referred you for the test.

**This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**