

# Having a capsule endoscopy to examine your small bowel

Department of Endoscopy

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: January 2025

Next review: January 2026

Leaflet number: 952 Version: 4

## What is a capsule endoscopy?

You will need to swallow a small capsule which is about the size of a vitamin pill. This is called an endocapsule. It contains a camera, battery, light source and transmitter. The camera takes 2 pictures every second for 8 hours. Pictures are sent to a data recorder. It is about the size of a portable CD player. Patients wear it around the waist.

This will help us to find if something is wrong in the gut (small bowel) such as bleeding, problems absorbing food nutrients, long term stomach pain, and long term diarrhoea.

Once swallowed, the camera moves naturally through the body. About 8 hours after swallowing the camera, you will need to return to the Endoscopy Unit. A nurse will take the data recorder and download the pictures to a computer. The capsule is disposable and will be passed naturally when you poo.

## What are the benefits?

- It is easy to swallow.
- It is painless
- You can relax in comfort and walk about, without a hospital stay.
- It tells us what we need to know
- Additional investigations can often be avoided.

Capsule endoscopy is usually used when other tests such as gastroscopy, colonoscopy or enteroscopy have not been able to find the cause of your problem.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What are the risks?

Capsule endoscopy is a safe procedure and side effects are rare. More than 400,000 examinations have been performed worldwide. The main risk is if the capsule does not pass naturally out of the body (retention). This is very rare. If this happens, an endoscopy or an operation may be needed to remove the capsule.

Other risks include the camera equipment failing to work, meaning the test has to be done again.

In very rare cases the capsule can cause a hole or tear (perforation). There is then a small chance this could cause an infection or some bleeding.

It is possible to carry out a trial first with a patency capsule that dissolves if it gets stuck in the body.

We will give you an advice sheet on what to expect and a phone number to call if you start to feel unwell.

## Please contact the Endoscopy Department if:

- there is a chance that you might be pregnant (capsule endoscopy is not undertaken if you are pregnant).
- you have had small bowel surgery in the past.
- you have a previous history of blockages in the gut.
- you have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease.
- you have been taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen or aspirin (these are usually stopped for a month before the procedure **but do not stop aspirin without consulting the Endoscopy Department**).

## What do I need to do before the procedure?

### Medications to be aware of:

- Please stop taking iron tablets 7 days before your appointment.
- Try to avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs if possible, or at least a month before your test (aspirin, ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen etc.), but do not stop aspirin without consulting the Endoscopy Department.
- If you are diabetic and take either insulin or tablets to control your diabetes, please contact the Endoscopy Department on **0116 258 6997**.
- All other medications are fine to continue as normal.

## Eating and drinking:

For a successful test your small bowel needs to be empty so that the capsule has a clear view.

### You should:

- eat a low residue/ low fibre diet for 3 days before your test (see below)
- **have no food from midday on the day before your test.**
- take only clear fluids from midday until midnight on the day before your test.  
This includes tea/ coffee without milk, water, squash, fizzy drinks, jelly (without red colouring) and ice lollies.
- have no food or drink (nil by mouth) from midnight on the day before your test.

### Please start a low residue/ fibre diet for 3 days before your test:

Some ideas for foods you can include in a low fibre diet:

**White** bread including rolls, toast, pitta bread, crumpets, tortilla wraps, plain naan, chapattis

White boiled rice

Dried or fresh white pasta (including gluten free)

Dried or fresh white noodles – egg or rice

Yam

Dishes made with maize, millet or cornmeal

Couscous – not wholemeal

Potatoes without skin

Lean/ tender meat and poultry / tofu

Fresh, frozen or tinned fish

Eggs - boiled, poached or scrambled







Cheese, cream cheese or milk

Rice pudding, yoghurt, custard

Crisps - Wotsits, Skips, Quavers

Cornflakes, Rice Crispies including chocolate/ sugar varieties

### Avoid the following high residue/ fibre foods for the 3 days before your test:

	Wholemeal bread including granary, seeded bread / rolls, toast, pitta bread, crumpets and tortilla wraps
	Foods made from wholemeal, granary or seeded flours
	Brown rice or pasta
	Potato and pasta that has been cooked and then eaten cold e.g. potato, pasta or rice salad.
	Avoid all fruits and vegetables
	Avoid all nuts, pulses, beans and lentils

## On the day of the procedure

Please come to the Endoscopy Department at the Leicester Royal Infirmary (Level 2, Windsor Building) at the time of your appointment.

For patients who meet eligible criteria, a patient transport service is available if you need transport to and from your appointment. This service is provided by [EMED Patient Care](#). To make a booking contact the service on 0300 777 1800, or arrange this through your GP, at least 3 days before your appointment.

A nurse will ask you some questions and take a brief medical history. You will be asked to sign a consent form to agree to the procedure. If you have any worries or questions at this stage, do not be afraid to ask.

We aim to keep waiting times to a minimum but depending on how busy we are, please expect to be with us for 1 to 2 hours. This may be longer during busy periods. We also undertake emergency procedures which can take priority over our outpatient appointments.

## What should I wear?

A belt is placed around your waist and some wires and a small bag around your shoulders. These are usually placed on top of a T-shirt or light top. You will then be able to put a jumper, cardigan or coat on top of these, if you need to throughout the day.

## What happens during the procedure?

- After talking to the nurse, a belt containing the radio sensors will be placed around your waist and the data recorder will be attached. This will stay in place for 8 hours.
- You will then swallow the capsule with a mouthful of water.
- After swallowing the capsule you must **not** eat or drink for **3** hours.
- After **3** hours, you can begin to drink only clear fluid.
- After **a further 2** hours (5 hours from when you swallowed the capsule) you can then eat a light snack, until the procedure is finished.
- Throughout the procedure (every 15 minutes) you will be asked to check that the blue light on the top of the data recorder continues to blink twice a second. This signals that the capsule images are being transmitted correctly. **Please contact the department if the light goes off.**
- Avoid strenuous exercise or physical activities that involve stooping/ bending or make you sweat.
- Do not lie down during the procedure and make sure you take regular walks.
- Contact the Endoscopy Department immediately if you have any tummy (abdominal) pain or are sick (vomit) during the procedure.

- You will be asked to return to the Endoscopy Department at about 5pm on the day of the procedure.
- The nurse will remove the sensor belt and data recorder. You can now go back to your normal activities and diet.
- The capsule is disposable. It will be passed from your body naturally in your poo.

## Discharge advice and follow-up

After the procedure is completed the information from the data recorder will be processed. A video will be created and reviewed. You will be given an outpatient appointment to discuss the results.

If we can see from the video that the capsule has not passed naturally through your body, we will contact you to come to the hospital for an X-ray.

**You should avoid any powerful electromagnetic fields particularly MRI scans until the capsule has passed. Please contact the department if this is a concern.**

## Contact details

If you have any concerns, questions or problems please contact the Endoscopy Department on 0116 258 6997. We are open 8am until 6pm, Monday to Sunday.

Outside of these hours you can contact the NHS helpline on 111 for advice.

If you develop any urgent problems after you have been discharged home, especially if you develop unexplained stomach pain, feeling or being sick, then please contact the Endoscopy Department on the above number. Outside of the above hours please contact Ward 42 on 0116 258 6284.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)