

Information for patients, families and carers

Patency Capsule Endoscopy

What is a patency capsule?

A patency capsule is used before a Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy for patients who have inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or where a narrowing of the small bowel is suspected.

The purpose of the test is to check whether a capsule the same size as the camera capsule can pass safely through your small bowel. This helps reduce the risk of the camera capsule becoming trapped.

The patency capsule is designed to dissolve if it does not pass naturally. If it remains inside your body after around 30 hours, it will break down into small pieces that can pass through your bowel safely.

During the procedure, you will be asked to swallow the capsule with a small glass of water. The procedure is quick and painless, although swallowing the capsule may feel similar to taking a large tablet and can cause slight discomfort.

After swallowing the capsule, you will be given an X-ray request card and can leave the department.

Unless you clearly see that the capsule has passed before 3pm the following day, you will need to return to the hospital for an abdominal X-ray. Please bring your X-ray request card with you, as this will be required for the examination.

Please attend the Radiology Department, F Block, Ground Floor, between 2pm and 3pm. The X-ray will check whether the capsule has passed through your digestive system and is no longer in your small bowel.

If you are unsure whether the capsule has passed, please attend for the X-ray as planned.

Preparing for your test

The day before your appointment

- After 4pm, do not eat anything.
- You may drink clear fluids only, such as water, tea or coffee without milk.
- Take any necessary medication with a sip of water.

On the day of your appointment

- Do not eat or drink anything, except for necessary medication with a sip of water.
- Bring in a list of all the medications that you take.

Swallowing the capsule

- On arrival at the endoscopy unit (1st floor E block), please come to the reception.
- A member of staff will discuss the procedure with you and answer any questions you may have.
- You will be asked to swallow the capsule with a small glass of water.
- You will be given an X-ray card which you must bring with you if you attend for an abdominal X-ray the following day.
- You should expect to be in the hospital for approximately one hour.

After swallowing the capsule

- You may drink water straight away.
- After four hours you may have a light snack.
- After 5pm you can return to your normal diet.

The day after your appointment

The patency capsule is designed to pass naturally through your digestive system. Unless you clearly see that the capsule has passed before 3pm the following day, you should attend for an abdominal X-ray.

Please attend the Radiology Department, F Block, Ground Floor, between 2pm and 3pm, bringing your X-ray request card with you. The X-ray will confirm whether the capsule has passed into the large bowel or left your body completely. This helps us determine whether it is safe for you to proceed with a Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy.

Most patients do not see the capsule when it passes. If you think the capsule has passed, please telephone us using the contact details below for advice about whether you still need to attend for the X-ray.

A doctor will review the X-ray within the next few days. We will only contact you if the result shows a problem that means the Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy cannot go ahead.

The week after your appointment

You will be given a further appointment to come to hospital for a Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy. Please read the 'Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy', information leaflet, which explains what to expect and how to prepare.

Important information

- You must not have swallowed any radiopaque solution (a special dye that shows up on X-rays) in the four weeks before this procedure. If you have, or have an upcoming appointment that requires contrast, please contact the department for advice.
- After swallowing the capsule, you should avoid strong electromagnetic fields, including MRI scans, until the capsule has passed.
- You can return to your normal daily activities immediately after the procedure.

- In most cases, the capsule passes naturally through the digestive system without causing any problems.

Possible risks and complications

Occasionally, the capsule may become delayed or trapped within the bowel. This is known as capsule retention and occurs in approximately 0.75% of patients.

The patency capsule is designed to dissolve between 30 and 100 hours after it is swallowed, allowing any remaining fragments to pass naturally through the bowel.

If you develop severe or persistent abdominal pain, vomiting, abdominal swelling, or any other symptoms that concern you, you should attend your nearest Emergency Department for assessment.

In rare cases where a blockage occurs, further treatment, including surgery, may be required.

Results

Your abdominal x-ray will be reviewed by a doctor to ensure it is safe to proceed with your Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy. Please attend your planned appointment for this procedure unless you are contacted and advised otherwise.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please telephone 01204 390273.

If you require any further information or advice, please contact the Clinical Endoscopist Team on 01204 390390, extension 143422 or 141805.

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other language or format, such as large print or audio, please contact **01204 390193**.

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