

Patient advice sheet

Patency capsule: Patient instructions

A patency test with the PillCam patency capsule safely determines whether an object the size of the PillCam video capsule can pass through your intestine. For this procedure, you will swallow a capsule made of dissolvable material surrounding a tiny Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag that can be detected by X-ray. If the capsule leaves your body before it dissolves, this confirms that your intestine is passable or “patent” for an object the size of the capsule. If the capsule is still inside your body after 30 hours, it will slowly dissolve into small pieces that can pass naturally through your intestine.

You will be contacted the next day to discuss whether the patency capsule has been passed. If it has, an appointment will be offered to come back for PillCam video capsule.

If the capsule has not been observed in your stool after 30 hours you will be advised to attend the hospital for an abdominal X-ray to determine whether the patency capsule it is still inside your body.

Please note: if you have a narrowing of your small bowel, the PillCam patency capsule can get stuck and obstruct your bowel. This can cause pain while the capsule is stuck, however, this will ease as the capsule dissolves. This process starts after about 30 hours, but it may take up to 100 hours for the capsule to completely breakdown. In occasional cases it may be necessary to be admitted to hospital for management of your symptoms, and very occasionally surgery is required.

If you need admission to hospital for any reason within 48 hours of taking a patency capsule please bring this leaflet to show to the medical team.

****Please note: if you take iron supplements, stop doing so one week before the procedure*

During the week before your Patency Test:

1. Note the frequency of your bowel movements.
2. If you do not have your bowels open at least once a day, start a daily laxative to make sure that the capsule will pass through your body before it starts to disintegrate.
3. Note any irregularity in your bowel movements during the week prior to the examination and prepare a list of all medications you are currently taking. (if you are diabetic or have any queries contact the endoscopy department).

The day before your test:

1. From midday start a liquid diet
2. Do not eat or drink anything after 10pm the night before your test. (nil by mouth)
3. Sips of water only, for necessary medication.

Day of your patency capsule:

After you have swallowed (ingested) the capsule:

- Do not eat or drink for at least 2 hours after swallowing the patency capsule. After this time you can have clear fluids.
- After 4 hours return to normal diet
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Patency capsule indications

The PillCam patency system is an accessory to the PillCam video capsule and is intended to verify adequate patency of the gastrointestinal tract prior to administration of the PillCam video capsule.

Situations or conditions when this procedure should not be used:

- Patients with a swallowing disorder
- Patients where a concern for aspiration exists (for example, due to cognitive or neurological deficits, history of aspiration or children under the age of 8 years).
- Patients with suspected or known intestinal strictures, who may be at increased risk for bowel obstruction.
- Patients with suspected or known gastrointestinal obstruction or fistulas
- A patient should not undergo an MRI scan while the capsule is inside their body as this may result in serious damage to the intestinal tract or abdominal cavity
- The safety of this device has not been established in pregnancy
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Risks associated with the procedure:

- Capsule retention
- Capsule aspiration
- Obstruction
- Perforation
- Mucosal injury or bleeding
- Allergic reaction to capsule material or other medication given
- Hospital admission for management of your symptoms

Advice for patients with diabetes who require a Capsule Endoscopy

This information is provided in addition to the instructions you have received. As a diabetic, you are at an increased risk of developing a low level of blood sugar when you do not eat for a prolonged period, called a 'hypo', which may produce sweating, shaking, and blurred vision. Have additional sugary/glucose drinks at home such as Lucozade. If you think you are having a 'hypo', have a glucose drink or take three glucose tablets immediately.

Contact us

You can contact the Video Capsule Endoscopy Specialist Nurse from Monday to Friday (8am to 6pm) on 01494 425073 (Wycombe Hospital) or 01296 315220 (Stoke Mandeville Hospital) if you have any queries or concerns.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can you help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Keeping your hands clean and wearing a face mask is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net.