Having a small bowel capsule endoscopy (Pillcam)
A guide to the test

Information for patients
Endoscopy
Introduction

You have been advised to have a small bowel capsule endoscopy.

We have written this booklet to help answer some of the concerns you may have about the test. It may not answer all of your questions, but if you have any worries please don't hesitate to ask.

Sister Victoria Thurston / Sister Ailish Healy:

- 0114 271 1900   Bleep: 2844

The aims of this booklet are:

- To explain what happens on the day of your test
- To tell you what preparation is required
- To answer some of the questions you may have about the test

What is a capsule endoscopy?

Capsule endoscopy (CE or pillcam) is a test which looks for abnormalities in the small bowel.

The small bowel (intestine) is the part of the gastrointestinal tract between the stomach and large bowel (colon). The bowel is small in diameter but between 3 and 5 metres long.

Pillcam
**Why do I need a capsule endoscopy?**

A capsule endoscopy is most commonly performed when conventional endoscopy has failed to reveal a cause for unexplained anaemia (iron deficient anaemia) or intestinal bleeding.

In this situation, a pill camera will find an answer in about 70% of cases. In older people, particularly those with heart problems, the most likely cause is leaky blood vessels called angioectasia.

Another common reason to use the pill camera is to diagnose Crohn's disease, particularly in cases where the diagnosis is suspected but not confirmed using standard endoscopy tests and x-rays. In this situation, we find evidence of Crohn's disease in about a third of the patients investigated.

**Can there be complications or risks?**

With this procedure there is a small risk that the test may need to be repeated. This is usually the case if the small bowel is not clean enough to see anything or the camera moved through the gastric tract too quickly. Should this be the case we will contact you to make another appointment.

The only real risk of capsule endoscopy is the failure of the pill camera to pass through the small bowel. In our experience, this has only happened to one person in over 200 procedures. Experience elsewhere suggests that when this happens, it does not pass through because of a narrowing in the small bowel which is the cause of the problem being investigated. So non-passage of the pill camera does mean that the answer has been found. Furthermore, it rarely blocks the bowel completely.

If there is any concern you may have a narrowed bowel we would perform a patency capsule first. This is a dummy pill that is swallowed to check the small bowel is clear and therefore safe to swallow the pill.
camera. If you require a patency capsule further information will be
given to you.

**MRI scanning is not permitted until the pillcam has been excreted from the body.**

Please tell us if you are pregnant as the capsule endoscopy should not be performed during pregnancy.

If you have a cardiac pacemaker or internal electromedical device please let us know by contacting us on the number given above.

**What happens if the pill camera does not pass through?**

If the pill camera reveals Crohn's, treatment with anti-inflammatory medications may allow the narrowed part of bowel to heal such that the pill passes by itself. If the pill camera is at the extreme upper or lower end of the small bowel, it may be possible to retrieve it using an endoscope. If the bowel is severely ulcerated or scarred or blocked by a tumour, an operation might be needed, not only to remove the pill camera, but to treat the disease also.

**How is the test done?**

The capsule is the size of a large vitamin pill (26 x 11mm). It contains a tiny video camera on a silicone chip, which is powered by 2 tiny batteries and a wireless transmitter.

You will be asked to swallow the capsule after taking laxatives and fasting for 12 hours. The capsule starts taking the photographs which are sent by transmitter through to sensors. The sensors are either in a belt worn around your waist or attached to the skin of your abdomen using sticky pads.
From there, the images go to a data recorder (pocket size computer) which is carried around in a shoulder bag.

The whole process takes 8-10 hours. We usually give the pill camera in the morning. Half an hour after swallowing the pillcam we will attach a portable laptop to your data recorder to make sure the pill camera has left the stomach.

Some people have slow gastric emptying. If this is the case with you, we may give you medication to increase the movement in your stomach. If this is unsuccessful, it may be necessary to place the pill camera using an endoscope. This will only be done if it is essential, and after discussion with you first.

After checking the capsule position, you may either go out for the day with instructions or stay on the Clinical Investigation Unit.

The equipment is removed after 8-10 hours. The images are then downloaded from the data recorder to a computer and this assembles the images as a video of the whole of the intestine. The video can then be reviewed by the doctor or nurse.

**Preparation for the test**

Please wear loose fitting clothing, preferably a t-shirt and trousers or shorts, when attending for your test.

Bowel preparation is an essential part of the examination and this involves dietary advice and use of laxatives. Your referring doctor will have indicated if you are able to take the bowel preparation. Please contact us if you are unsure.

Please note: We advise that you read the patient information leaflet enclosed in the Klean prep packet as well as reading this booklet. **However, please follow the preparation instructions in this booklet for the test, not the Klean prep leaflet.**
It is important that you make sure that you are not allergic to any of the Klean prep ingredients and that it does not react with any other medication you are taking.

If you experience common side effects of taking Klean prep i.e. vomiting, bloating and stomach cramps, try drinking the Klean prep more slowly.

If you experience other side effects or have any questions regarding the Klean prep, please contact the Clinical Investigation Unit on:

- 0114 271 2218

**Preparing for the test**

The day before the examination have a light breakfast i.e. cereal, toast. Following this you must not take any further solid food, only clear fluids. Examples of clear fluid include: clear strained soup, Lucozade, tea or coffee but with little milk or no milk, Bovril or Oxo.

Following the instructions, dissolve the first sachet of powder into 1 litre of water and drink this over the next few hours starting at 9.00am. Repeat the same instructions for the remaining sachet.

You may mix your sachets with lime cordial if you require. Loose bowel movements may occur anytime after the first sachet until you have taken both sachets.

**Please drink water only from 9.00pm the night before your admission.**

After the examination you may eat and drink as normal.
Medication

Do not take any medication on the day of the test. The nurse will advise you when you can take your medication.

If you are diabetic, or require further advice about your medications, please contact:

Sister Victoria Thurston / Sister Ailish Healy:
0114 271 1900    Bleep:  2844

Do bring your other tablets or medicines with you so that you can take them after you have had your procedure.

When you arrive at Ward P1 (Clinical Investigation Unit)

On arrival at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital please go into the main building on B Road and take the lift to P Floor. Ward P1 (Clinical Investigation Unit) is clearly signed as you exit the lift. Make your way to the ward reception where you will be checked and shown to the day case facility.

A nurse will visit you for pre-assessment. This involves checking your pulse, blood pressure and checking your preparation. We will also check if you have any allergies before confirming your arrangements for the day.

Please feel free to ask questions or voice any worries you may have regarding your test.

The consent form

Before a doctor or healthcare professional examines or treats you, they will need to gain your consent. This will be required in writing. If you later change your mind, you are entitled to withdraw consent even after signing. A copy of the consent form will be offered to you.
What should I know before deciding?

The health professional / doctor will ensure you know enough information about the procedure to enable you to decide about your treatment. They will write this information on the consent form as well as discussing choices of treatment with you. We encourage you to ask questions and inform us of any concerns that you may have. It may be helpful for you to write these down as a reminder.

What are the key things to remember?

The main thing to remember is that it is your decision. It’s up to you to choose whether or not to consent to what is being proposed. Ask as many questions as you like and please express any concerns about medication, allergies or past medical history.

Can I find out more about giving consent?

Further information about consent is available on the NHS Choices website as follows:

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment

What happens after the test?

You may go home when the test is complete. Do not worry if you do not see the pill camera pass. Most people don’t. We have known it to be in the body for 2 weeks before being passed out. It flushes away down the toilet. Please do not send it back to us.

When can I get back to my normal activities?

You should be ready to get back to your normal activities immediately.
Getting your results

Results can take up to 4-6 weeks. This is because of the time it takes to look at the large number of images.

Results are sent to your referring doctor and GP. If results are required urgently your doctor can contact us.

If you have any problems when you go home, or are feeling worse than you expected, please contact the Clinical Investigation Unit on the following number:

• 0114 271 2218
Frequently asked questions and answers

1. If my symptoms have stopped before the capsule endoscopy, should I still come for the test?

   Yes. It is important that you still come for the test. Your doctor has arranged the test to try and identify a cause for your anaemia or bleeding.

2. Will it hurt?

   No. These examinations are not painful.

3. Can I drive home after the procedure if I choose?

   Yes. There are no after effects from the test.

4. Can I park at the hospital?

   Yes, we do have a car park, this is indicated on the enclosed map. The rates are as follows:*

   **Royal Hallamshire Hospital**

   Up to 2 hours = £2.40
   Up to 4 hours = £3.50
   Over 4 hours = £8.40

   Disabled parking bays in the multi-storey car park are charged at normal rate, however there are disabled parking bays on A and B Roads which are free of charge.

   *Car parking charges are correct at time of printing. Please ensure you check the rates before parking.
5. Can I get public transport to the hospital?

Yes, the hospital is well served by public transport. For further details contact Traveline as follows.

- Traveline: **01709 515151**
- [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/default.aspx](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/default.aspx)

6. Are there facilities to obtain refreshments?

Yes refreshments are available in the cafe on B Floor and in the dining room on D Floor of the Royal Hallamshire. Tea and coffee are also available on the ward.