

Capsule Endoscopy



KANAKIA
Health Care

Dr. Raju Kanakia

MD, DNB (Gastroenterology)

• Gastroenterologist • Hepatologist
• Interventional G I Endoscopist

w: www.kanakiahealthcare.com • t: 022 2417 3232 / 2410 1133

What is capsule endoscopy?

Capsule endoscopy examines the inside of your digestive tract, especially the small intestine which is not possible with tube endoscopy. A pill size video camera is swallowed which has its own light source and takes pictures every two seconds. The pictures are sent to a recorder that is worn on the body. These pictures are viewed later by the doctor.

The capsule is the size of a large pill – just over 1-inch long and less than ½-inch wide. The capsule will not be absorbed or digested, but it will move through the digestive system and leave through a bowel movement. There is no need to retrieve or return the capsule to your doctor. Each capsule is designed for a single use and will not harm the environment or your household plumbing.

Why is capsule endoscopy done?

Capsule endoscopy is done to evaluate the small intestine, which cannot be reached by upper endoscopy or colonoscopy. The most common reason for doing capsule endoscopy is to find cause of bleeding in small intestine. It also done to detect and diagnose:

- Polyps
- Tumors
- Celiac disease
- Crohn's disease
- Erosions (superficial ulcers)

Sometimes it is also done to check progress and monitor the disease after it is diagnosed and treatment given.

How to prepare for capsule endoscopy?

- Do not eat or drink 12 hours before the test.
- A preparation may be given to clean the small bowel before the test.
- Tell your doctor in advance about any medications you take. Certain medications will be stopped and some can be taken two hours prior to swallowing the capsule.

What can you expect during the test?

- Do not do any strenuous exercise or lifting heavy weights, and you should not bend or stoop during the test.
- The recorder is worn on a special belt around the waist.
- After two hours of swallowing the capsule you can take clear liquids.
- After 4-6 hours a light lunch or snack can be taken.
- A normal meal can be taken after 8 hours.
- The test is generally over in 8-12 hours, when the recorder is removed and given back to the doctor.
- The capsule will come out through a normal bowel movement.
- If you do not see it pass or if your doctor does not see it reach the large intestine on video, then an X-ray may be needed sometime after two weeks have passed.

When will the test results be ready?

The capsule camera takes about 50,000 images, which are recorded in the recorder

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you wear. These images are transferred to a computer and with special software the images are strung together to create a video. The doctor will see the video to look for abnormalities in the digestive tract. The results take a few days to a week or longer at times.

What are the advantages of capsule endoscopy?

- The test has no recovery time as no anesthesia is used.
- It is more pleasant for some patients to swallow a capsule than undergo conventional endoscopy.
- The small intestine is difficult to see by other means, whereas capsule endoscopy takes detailed images of intestinal lining.

What are the limitations of capsule endoscopy?

- The images recorded may not highlight an area of interest sufficiently as the camera capsule is not under voluntary control, and this may necessitate further testing.
- Unlike traditional endoscopy, the camera can only record, so taking a biopsy or removing a polyp is not possible with this procedure.

What are the complications or risks of capsule endoscopy?

It is generally a safe procedure and complications are rare, but is contraindicated in some patients.

If you have a permanent pacemaker, you may have to undergo the test in a hospital to monitor you throughout the procedure. The capsule can get stuck at a narrowed down spot in the digestive tract resulting in bowel obstruction. Signs of obstruction include unusual bloating, abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting. You should call your doctor immediately for any such concerns. Also, if you develop a fever after the test, have trouble swallowing or experience chest pain, tell your doctor immediately.