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National Endoscopy  
Programme



# Colon Capsule Endoscopy

**Patient Information Booklet**



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# Colon Capsule Endoscopy Service

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Please take some time to read this booklet carefully. It provides you with all the information you need about this new test.

If there is anything you do not understand or want to check with us, please get in touch. Our contact details are on the back page.

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## Introduction

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The Colon Capsule Endoscopy test is a new test for patients who need to have an examination of their large bowel (colon).

Your hospital team will have told you that you have been referred for this test and you may already have received a letter and/or information about the test.

Colon Capsule Endoscopy staff will be in touch with you to talk to you about the test and they will arrange your appointment, guide you through the preparation for your test and help with the test itself.

## Why am I having this test?

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There are a number of reasons why you may need an examination of your large bowel (colon) and are being considered for this test:

- You may have symptoms like a change in your bowel habit or blood in your stool (poo).
- You might require a test to check for bowel diseases which you may be at risk of developing or are already known to have.
- You may have been referred for this test because you were unable to have a colonoscopy.
- As part of your local Health Board pathway for investigation of those with bowel symptoms
- Your overall health and the benefits and risks of alternative investigations in yourself

## What is the Colon Capsule Endoscopy Test?

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This test is for patients who need to have an examination of their large bowel (colon).

Your bowel takes away the waste your body does not need.

The large bowel is normally checked by a colonoscopy test – this is done using a thin flexible tube with a camera on the end. The tube is inserted into your bottom and goes round the large bowel.



Instead of a colonoscopy, you are being offered a colon capsule endoscopy.

The Colon Capsule Endoscopy test uses a PillCam capsule which is about the **size of a vitamin pill (diagram below NOT actual size)**.

- The capsule contains 2 tiny cameras inside.
- You swallow the capsule.
- The cameras take thousands of pictures of the lining of your bowel as the capsule passes through it.



- The pictures are sent to a recorder which you wear on a belt during the test.
- These pictures are looked at by your hospital team and a report is made following review of the pictures.
- Your doctor/specialist nurse will then discuss with you any problems or signs of disease.

### How do I prepare for the Colon Capsule Endoscopy test?

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For this test to work well your bowel needs to be very clean so the cameras get the best pictures.

#### **At least 3 days before your test, you will be asked to:**

- Take some medication which helps soften your stools (poo).
- Change your diet to eating and drinking foods which will reduce the amount of stool (poo) in your bowel.

On the day before your test and again on the morning of the test, you will need to take some strong laxatives.

You will receive all your bowel preparation medications separately in the post. This is medication that will help clean and prepare your bowel for your Colon Capsule Endoscopy test.

Along with the medication you will also be provided with all the details about how and when to take it in the **Bowel Preparation Information Booklet**. In this booklet, you will also find information about the types of food and drinks you will be asked to take for a few days before your test.

It is important that you follow all the guidance as the capsule can't take good pictures if your insides have any remaining food or food waste (stools/poo).

You get your bowel clean by making changes to your diet and by taking the medications which are sent to you in the post.

### **What should I do regarding existing medications that I take?**

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Please note that it is also important that you **stop taking any Iron tablets** one week prior to your test, **otherwise please continue to take any regular medications you have been prescribed by your GP/Consultant**.

Please let your team know if you are **diabetic, you will need to speak to your diabetic specialist nurse or diabetic team** who will advise you what to do, ahead of the test.

Your team will also usually let you know if they need to check any additional blood tests for you (particularly if you are taking any medication like water tablets or for your heart or kidney conditions)

### **What happens on the day of the test?**

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- You will be asked to attend an appointment at the hospital
- It is important that you arrive on time for your appointment
- Your appointment will last around 30 minutes
- A small number of patients may need extra laxatives if their poo isn't clear enough
- A Colon Capsule Endoscopy team member will check you are ready for your test. You will be fitted with a special belt and image recorder, which you will wear like a shoulder bag. The recorder will start to capture the pictures of your bowel which are sent wirelessly from the capsule.



**Before you leave the clinic, a Colon Capsule Endoscopy team member will:**

- Give you the Colon Capsule which you will swallow
- Give you a tablet or syrup which will help the capsule pass quickly into your bowel
- Give you the next packet of bowel medications (laxative boosters and a suppository) to take. These will help the capsule pass through your body.
- Give you instruction sheets to guide you through how to take the booster (laxative) medications and suppository
- Arrange a time and place for you to return your belt and image recorder

**When you are back home**

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- You wear the belt and recorder at home during the whole test which lasts around 6 hours
- During the day of your test, you will be asked to take more laxatives as a 'booster' to help move the capsule through your bowel
- The capsule will normally pass out of your bowel in the evening before you go to bed, and will just be flushed safely away down the toilet
- The suppository given to you can be used if needed, to help the capsule pass. This is inserted into your bottom

## What does the image recorder and capsule look like?

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## What happens after my test?

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- The day after the test you will return the belt and recorder to the agreed drop-off point
- The pictures from your test are uploaded from your recorder onto a computer once it is returned
- These pictures are then made into a video which is looked at by a trained member of the team
- A report of your test is sent to your doctor/nurse to be reviewed
- The relevant doctor/nurse will contact you with the results

## Will I need another (different) test after my colon capsule endoscopy?

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Your doctor/nurse will decide whether you need a further test based on your Colon Capsule report.

For patients who may need another test, this is usually for one of these reasons:

- To investigate something the capsule found
- The bowel was not clean enough for the capsule's cameras to record good pictures
- The capsule did not make it all the way around the large bowel before the battery ran out

This further test may be a colonoscopy, or a shorter camera test called a flexible sigmoidoscopy.

A follow up test may be done urgently depending on what is found on the Colon Capsule report.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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- **Do I have to take someone with me to my appointment?**  
You do not have to take anyone else with you at the appointment as you will be able to drive home on your own or use public transport.
- **What should I wear to my appointment?**  
It is best to wear loose comfortable clothing. We do not advise you wear an all-in-one outfit, as the belt has an aerial that goes over your left shoulder.
- **What if I forget my consent form or can't fill it in?**  
Don't worry – the nurse will have extra forms.  
If you haven't managed to fill it in, the nurse will be able to help you with this at your appointment.
- **How long does the capsule take to come out?**  
On average this usually takes 6 hours, however everyone is different. Some people pass the capsule earlier than this or it can take longer.

- **What should I do if my capsule is not passed on the same day as my test?**  
Please do not panic, this is common. Keep the belt and recorder on all day and remove it just before you go to bed. The capsule should be passed the following day.
- **What if I am not sure if the capsule has come out?**  
You may not know the capsule has been passed as it could be mixed in with your stools (poo). Unless you feel unwell it is more than likely that the capsule has been passed. If you have severe stomach pain or vomiting, you should contact your team or if out of hours call NHS 24 on 111.
- **Are there any risks involved that I should be aware of?**  
With Capsule endoscopy, like most procedures, there is a level of risk, but this is deemed to be very low. Studies show that none to very few complications have occurred with Colon Capsule Endoscopy (CCE). With Small-Bowel Capsule Endoscopy, there is an overall incidence of capsule retention (getting stuck) of 1–2%. The risk of this with CCE is very low. Available studies with CCE, despite the larger capsule size, have not reported any capsule retention or getting stuck either in the small bowel or in the colon.
- **Does the capsule ever get stuck?**  
As mentioned above, this is very rare, but should this happen, you could occasionally feel unwell. If you do feel unwell (severe stomach pain or vomiting) you should contact your team during normal working hours (09.00am- 17.00pm). Outside of these hours please call NHS 24 on 111.
- **When can I start to eat and drink normally again?**  
You can eat and drink normally again 6 hours after being given the capsule, or as soon as the capsule has passed.
- **What if I do not think I can do all this?**  
If you are unable to follow any of the guidance for whatever reason, then it is important that you contact us, and we can see how we can help you.



## Colon Capsule Endoscopy Team

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We want to make this process as easy as possible for you and we are here to support you.

Please contact us at any time if you have any question about the test or what you should do to prepare for it.

## Contact Details

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Colon Capsule Endoscopy Team

Telephone:

Please return your belt and image recorder to:

Please let us know if you require this information in another language or format.

You can also access more information about the Colon Capsule Endoscopy test online on the Medtronic website by using the QR code below:



## Acknowledgements

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This leaflet was developed through consultation with the Colon Capsule Endoscopy Working Group and is largely based on documentation produced by the NHS Scotland ScotCap Service that was kindly shared with us following the development of their own pilot CCE services.

## Key Contacts

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<b>National Endoscopy Programme</b> <a href="mailto:National.EndoscopyProgramme@wales.nhs.uk">National.EndoscopyProgramme@wales.nhs.uk</a>	
Professor Sunil Dolwani (Author)	Professor of Gastroenterology and Consultant Gastroenterologist at Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and Clinical lead for National Endoscopy Programme – Clinical Pathways
Dana Knoyle (Author)	Managerial and Nurse Lead for Clinical Pathways, National Endoscopy Programme
Naomi Davies	Senior Project Manager, National Endoscopy Programme
<b>Cardiff &amp; Vale University Health Board</b>	
Dr Jeff Turner Dr Lawrence Sunderraj Angela Green	Consultant Gastroenterologist Consultant Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist Lead nurse in Capsule Endoscopy
<b>Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board</b>	
Dr Bee Lee	Consultant Gastroenterologist
<b>Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board</b>	
Dr Jonathan Sutton	Consultant Gastroenterologist
<b>Swansea Bay University Health Board</b>	
Dr Mesbah Rahman	Consultant Gastroenterologist