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## **What is Capsule Endoscopy?**

Capsule endoscopy involves swallowing a jelly bean sized plastic capsule which passes naturally through the digestive tract. The capsule takes two pictures per second of the small intestine and transmits them to a data recorder worn on a belt for the duration of the test which is about 8 hours. The pictures are later reviewed on a computer by a gastroenterologist. Capsule endoscopy is generally safe and well tolerated with a 60% chance of finding the cause of otherwise unexplained anaemia.

### **Please note:**

1. Stringent Medicare criteria apply for funding of capsule endoscopy (which is expensive)
2. The cost is \$1,530 for this examination, and the Medicare rebate is \$1,253.2. You must pay upfront, and a claim is lodged for you once the device is returned.

## **The day before capsule endoscopy examination:**

1. **Have breakfast and a light lunch, then drink only clear fluids – nothing more to eat.**
2. **Drink plenty of clear fluids**  
The reason for the fluids is to keep you hydrated and to ‘flush’ the small bowel out. Clearer pictures of the end of the small bowel are obtained if you drink plenty of fluids. If you do not drink the clear fluids you may have to have a repeat capsule of endoscopy, with colonoscopy bowel prep the day before.
3. You may drink clear fluid up until you come into the rooms for the PillCam

### **Approved Clear Fluids**

Water, clear salty fluids (clear broth, strained miso soup) clear fruit juices (eg apple, pear) plain jelly, black tea or coffee (no milk), sports drinks (Gatorade, Powerade, Hydralyte etc) carbonated beverages, clear fruit cordials. Moderate alcohol is allowed.

## **The day of capsule endoscopy examination:**

### **Do not take medication within two hours of the examination**

Wear loose fitting, two piece clothing as a belt needs to be fitted around your waist.

You will be required to come in to the rooms in the morning to get fitted and swallow the capsule.

## **Swallowing the capsule**

A large, wide 'belt' will be placed firmly around your waist – please wear loose fitting pants/skirt to enable the belt to sit over your belly button area. A data recorder is then hung over your shoulder and connected to the belt. After that, you will swallow the capsule with some water.

You can leave straight after swallowing the capsule, and you will need to return the same afternoon 6 to 8 hours later to have the equipment removed. It may be possible to remove the equipment yourself at home, but the rooms will advise.

## **After swallowing the capsule**

During the day, check the blue light on the top of the data recorder at least every 15 minutes – if the light stops blinking, note the time and call the rooms.

You may now continue having clear fluids, but you must wait 4 hours until you can eat a light meal and take your medication (unless otherwise advised after swallowing the capsule.) Once the equipment is removed, you can eat normally.

While wearing the device, you may walk, sit, lie down or drive. You may return to work, if you can avoid unsuitable environments and physical activities. Do not exercise. Avoid heavy lifting. Try not to touch the data recorder or the leads and avoid getting them wet.

Avoid going near MRI machines and radio transmitters. You may use a computer, radio, stereo or mobile phone. Do not stand directly next to another patient undergoing Capsule Endoscopy.

**Return to the rooms at the time indication (6 to 8 hours after your swallowed the capsule) to have the equipment removed. It is not expected that you will have passed the capsule before the equipment is returned.**

Pain or nausea is very uncommon following capsule endoscopy. Should you feel persistent pain or nausea, please call the rooms.

The capsule passes naturally in a bowel movement, typically in 24-72 hours. Most likely you will be unaware of its passage. It does not need to be retrieved and can safely be flushed down the toilet. Should you be concerned that the capsule has not passed after 7 days, please call the rooms.

Until the capsule passes, further testing which includes any type of MRI should be avoided. If you have an MRI scheduled within the next 3 days, it should be postponed.

Results are generally available within a week of the procedure. A report will be sent to your GP and your referring doctor.