



Capsule Endoscopy

What is it and why do I need it?

Capsule endoscopy is a small capsule that contains a light and a tiny camera. The capsule is swallowed and the camera takes thousands of pictures of the gastrointestinal tract with special attention to the small intestine. It is not intended to examine the esophagus, stomach or colon, which are best examined by upper endoscopy or colonoscopy. It is not meant to replace those exams.

Typically, capsule endoscopy is used to identify sources of unexplained gastrointestinal blood loss that may be coming from the small intestine. It may also be used to evaluate for inflammation in the small intestine, Crohn's disease and small bowel tumors.

The risks

The risks of capsule endoscopy are very low, but do include small bowel obstruction (the capsule lodges in the small intestine and causes a blockage) that may require surgery. You will need to avoid MRI machines until after the capsule has passed out of your body. If you have concerns about these risks, contact your physician before your procedure.

The preparation

To ensure optimal visualization of your small intestine, it is necessary to take a bowel prep similar to a colonoscopy. You are welcome to view and print these instructions (please click on below):

Capsule Endoscopy – Miralax

Capsule Endoscopy – Golytely *(only use if specifically advised by HG staff)*

The procedure

On the morning of your appointment, you will meet with one of our nurses who will prepare you for the procedure. He or she will attach monitoring devices around your waist and then ask you to swallow the capsule. The pictures that the capsule takes will be wirelessly transmitted to your recording device during the day. Under certain conditions, you may need to stay in the office area; you will be instructed to do so if necessary. Our nurses will give you instructions about eating and drinking during the test.

After the procedure

The test takes approximately 8 hours to complete. You will then return the recording device to our office later that day or the next morning. The captured photos will be downloaded and then interpreted by one of our physicians. You will be able to resume your usual diet and activities. The capsule will pass naturally in your stool, although this may take several days and you may not notice it. You do not need to retrieve it and it can be safely flushed down the toilet. You should be contacted by your ordering physician with the results within 2 weeks.

Instructional Forms for your review:

Capsule Endoscopy

Consent Form

Capsule Endoscopy Brochure

During Capsule Endoscopy

Post Capsule Endoscopy