

## Patient information

# Having an Upper Gastrointestinal (GI) Capsule

Digestive Diseases Care Group

It has been arranged for you to have a test called an Upper Gastrointestinal (GI) capsule endoscopy.

### **What is an upper gastrointestinal (GI) capsule?**

Upper GI capsule endoscopy (VCE or Pillcam) is a test which looks for abnormalities in the gullet and stomach.

For this test you will be asked to swallow a capsule the size of a large vitamin pill. The capsule contains a tiny video camera at either end.

During the test, the capsule takes photographs. The photographs are transmitted via sensors attached to your chest and abdomen. The data recorder is the size of a small book and is carried in a shoulder bag.

Just before swallowing the capsule we will ask you to drink several glasses of water. We will then ask you to swallow the capsule lying down on your left side. During the test you will be asked to change your position on the bed several times. The bed will also be tilted during the procedure.

After the positional changes have been completed we will check the position of the capsule. Ideally the capsule should have passed from the stomach and into the first part of the small intestine before the end of the test.

Most people will need to swallow a medicine to increase movement in the stomach to encourage the capsule to pass into the small intestine.

At the end of the test you can eat and drink again normally and will be discharged home.

The whole process takes around two to three hours.

### **What are the benefits of having an upper GI capsule?**

An upper GI capsule allows us to look for abnormalities in your oesophagus, stomach and first part of your small bowel.

## **Alternative investigations**

There are alternative investigations to view your upper GI tract. However they all have slightly different risks and benefits. You should discuss this with the doctor or nurse who arranged for you to have this test.

### **What are the risks of having upper GI capsule endoscopy?**

With this procedure there is a small risk the test may need to be repeated. This is usually the case if the views of the stomach are not clear enough or if the equipment fails. The only real risk of capsule endoscopy is if there is any narrowing in the gastrointestinal tract. If abnormal narrowing is present, this can cause the capsule to become trapped.

It is thought the risk of a capsule not passing through is less than 1 in 200. If there is any concern you could have an abnormality causing narrowing we would arrange for you to have a test to look at the small bowel first. We will arrange for you to have an abdominal X-ray, two weeks after the test to make sure that the capsule has passed through.

### **What happens if the capsule does not pass?**

Sometimes we can use medicine to heal up any inflammation in the bowel to help the capsule pass naturally. Alternatively, a camera test (endoscopy) or an operation may be needed to both retrieve the capsule and also to diagnose or treat the problem causing the capsule to be held up.

### **Getting ready for your upper GI endoscopy.**

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

**You should not have anything to eat or drink for six hours before your admission.**

**You should not have this investigation if you are pregnant. Please inform the appointments line (Tel: 0151 706 2720 Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2720) if this is the case.**

**Do not take any medication six hours before the test.**

**The nurse will advise you when you can take your medication. If you have diabetes then please contact Tel: 0151 706 2656. Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2656**

### **What will happen if I do not have this procedure done?**

If you decide you do not want to have an Upper GI capsule you can speak to your referring doctor who can discuss alternative tests with you.

### **Your results**

A report will be issued to your doctor within two weeks of the test.

### **Transport**

Transport has not been arranged for this appointment so it will be necessary for you to make your own arrangements.

Parking for patients and visitors is available at the Q-Park multi storey car park opposite the main hospital entrance on Prescott Street. The entrance by car is on Epworth Street off Erskine Street. The car park is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is a private car park and charges apply. The car park is continually monitored by parking hosts. There are disabled spaces within the car park. If you need help, please speak with a parking host at the car park entrance.

If you have been referred to us from clinic and usually have an ambulance to bring you for your appointment, please contact us on Tel: 0151 706 2720 as soon as possible.  
Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2720

If you need to discuss the investigation further please contact the specialist nurse, Emma McCulloch on Tel: 07880279372.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

**If you have any questions or queries, please contact:  
The Gastroenterology Unit during the following hours**

<b>Monday – Thursday</b>	<b>08:00 – 21:00 hrs</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>08:00 – 17:00 hrs</b>
<b>Saturday/Sunday/BH</b>	<b>08:00 – 16:00 hrs</b>

**Tel: 0151 706 2819/2726**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2720**

### **Clinic appointment enquiries**

**Tel: 0151 706 5555**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 5555**

**The Emergency Department (A&E) is open 24 hours**

**Telephone number 0151 706 2051/2050**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2051/2050**

**Author: Digestive Diseases Care Group**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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