



# Colon capsule endoscopy

## Information for patients attending King's College Hospital site only

This information leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about having a colon capsule endoscopy. It explains the risks and benefits of the test and what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have more questions at any time, please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff.

### Endoscopy Unit

Reception	020 3299 3599
Pre-assessment	020 3299 2775
Nurses' Station	020 3299 4079

### Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your name and date of birth and check your ID band. If you do not have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address. If we do not ask these questions, then please ask us to check. Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

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## **Important information**

Please make sure you read and follow the instructions in the following sections on pages 4 and 5:

- Do I need to prepare for the test?
- Do I need to stop taking my medication?
- What will I need on the day of the test?
- Things to remember

Failure to follow this advice will result in your appointment being cancelled.

## **What is a colon capsule endoscopy?**

This is a test to examine your large bowel (colon). It involves swallowing a capsule camera. The camera is about the size of a large vitamin tablet. The images are transmitted to a data recorder that you wear in a pouch and strap around your shoulder. After the procedure is completed, the images are downloaded for analysis.

## **Why do I need this test?**

Your GP or hospital specialist has recommended you have this test. It helps us find out more about what is causing your symptoms. It is important that you understand why you are having it. If you are not clear about the reasons, please check with the capsule nurse who sees you on the day of your test.

## **What are the benefits?**

A colon capsule endoscopy is an entirely non-invasive test, which means we do not generally use any endoscopes, tubes or injections to complete it. We can get good images of parts of your large bowel very safely and easily. This helps us to reach a diagnosis and make sure you are on the best treatment.

## **What are the risks?**

Colon capsule endoscopy is an extremely safe procedure, and most complications are very rare. Complications can include:

- The capsule can get stuck inside you if you have a narrowing in your bowel. We consider the risk of this happening before you have the test, so it is very unlikely. If it does, depending on what is causing the narrowing, you may need a keyhole operation to remove the capsule.
- There is a small risk that the bowel preparation has not worked, and the bowel is not clean enough to obtain clear images for accurate diagnosis. If this occurs, we may ask you to repeat the procedure.
- There is a small risk that the equipment might not work properly.
- There is a very small risk of aspiration (capsule going down the wrong tract).

## **Are there any alternatives?**

The alternative is a colonoscopy. We put a long, thin, flexible tube called a colonoscope into your large bowel from your bottom. The colonoscope is a bit thicker than your little finger and has a camera in its tip which sends video images of the inside of your colon to a monitor screen. During the examination, we can take biopsies or remove polyps through the colonoscope.

The other alternative is to not have the test at all. This would result in no diagnosis being made.

## **Do I need to have a sedative?**

No. Once you have swallowed the video capsule, you will be able to leave the Endoscopy Unit.

## **Will it hurt?**

The capsule, which is a similar size to a large vitamin tablet (26mm x 11mm), is swallowed easily by most patients. It has a smooth texture like capsules for pain relief. You should not feel any pain or discomfort when swallowing it, or while it moves through your colon.

## **Do I need to prepare for the test?**

This procedure requires you to have a nursing pre-assessment before the date of your procedure. If we are unable to contact you for your pre-assessment, we will not be able to advise you how to prepare for your procedure. Therefore, the procedure may be cancelled on the day.

We need to get a clear view of the inside of your colon so it must be as clean as possible. You need to take a laxative beforehand to prepare your bowel. Information which explains how and when to use the laxative will be ready for collection or will be posted to you after the pre-assessment.

## **Do I need to stop taking my medication?**

- If you take iron tablets, stop these at least one week before your test.
- If you take loperamide (Imodium), codeine or other drugs that make you constipated, stop taking these two days before your test.
- If you are taking any other medications, including for diabetes, discuss these with the pre-assessment nurse. They may need to be stopped before the procedure.

## **What will I need on the day of the test?**

- Please wear a loose top that buttons up or zips up at the front. You need to wear a sensor belt around your waist as part of the procedure.
- Please bring a list of any medications that you are currently taking.
- Please bring your reading glasses as you will need to read and sign your consent form.

- You may want to bring something to read while you wait or headphones to listen to music or a podcast.
- Please bring your appointment letter if you were sent one.
- Please consider walking or using public transport on your way to the hospital, if you can, to reduce the carbon footprint of your appointment.
- There is no general public car parking at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill site. Please see the following website for further information: [www.kch.nhs.uk/patientsvisitors/getting-to-kings/parking](http://www.kch.nhs.uk/patientsvisitors/getting-to-kings/parking)

## Things to remember

- **Your appointment time is the time you are expected to arrive in the department.**
- Please do not bring children with you unless there is someone to look after them. We do not have any childcare facilities in the unit.
- We cannot take responsibility for any valuables, but your things will always be kept with you.
- The waiting room has limited seating. Only one person can remain in the waiting room throughout your stay. They will not be allowed into clinical areas.

## What happens when I arrive for my test?

When you arrive, a capsule nurse will complete the health assessment with you, if you have not already done so. A member of the clinical team will come and explain the procedure to you.

### Consent

We must by law obtain your written consent to any procedures beforehand. Staff will explain all the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask to speak with a senior member of staff.

## What happens before the test?

A wide belt will be placed around your waist, which will be attached to a recording device. The recording device will be placed into a shoulder bag for you to wear.

## What happens during the test?

The nurse practitioner will check that the capsule is transmitting pictures to the recorder and then ask you to swallow the capsule with a glass of water.

After you have swallowed the capsule you may leave the Unit. We will give you a booster pack which contains laxatives that help hasten the passage of the capsule through the small bowel to ensure sufficient battery life for the examination of the colon. These laxatives will also help keep your colon clear to allow the capsule to capture clear images and ensure accurate diagnosis.

You can stop taking the laxatives when you have pooped out the capsule. There is no need to retrieve the capsule.

It is best to remain active, walking around when possible to encourage natural movement through the bowels. You should avoid lying down or sleeping during the procedure. You will not be able to eat anything for most of the day.

### **How long does the test take?**

The capsule endoscopy procedure is complete after ten hours or when you see the camera capsule in the toilet after having a poo, whichever comes first.

### **What happens after the test?**

The equipment can be removed after the capsule has passed out of the body. The capsule can be flushed away as normal.

We will ask you to return the recorder to the Endoscopy Unit the following day, preferably by midday. The images will be uploaded on to a computer for a doctor to review.

It is very important that you return the recorder promptly on the day agreed with the capsule nurse as the recorder is needed for use by other patients. Please note we cannot accept postal returns, you, or someone you trust, must return the recorder back in person to the Endoscopy Unit.

### **What happens when I go home?**

Please contact your GP if you have any of the following symptoms:

- severe abdominal bloating or pain
- persistent nausea or vomiting

If you wish to contact the Endoscopy Unit or speak to the endoscopy nursing staff please call the numbers on page one, between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Sunday.

Out of the hours above, for urgent worries or queries, contact NHS Direct on telephone number 111 or go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department and inform them about your recent test.

**The colon capsule is incompatible with MRI magnetic fields. Therefore, you cannot have an MRI examination for 30 days after the colon capsule endoscopy. Undergoing an MRI while the capsule remains in the body can cause serious damage. If you cannot confirm the excretion of the capsule, please contact your doctor for evaluation and possibly an abdominal X-ray before undergoing an MRI.**

## **When will I get my results?**

A copy of your results will be posted to your GP and the doctor who requested the test within 2 to 5 weeks. If action is required, the doctor will write or contact you directly regarding the results.

## **Who can I contact with queries and concerns?**

If you have any questions, such as what to do about medication, before or after your test, or would like to change or cancel the appointment, use the contact numbers of the relevant department provided on page one.

**The Endoscopy Department is working hard to reduce the impact of its service on the environment, to find out more please see [www.kch.nhs.uk/services/services-a-to-z/endoscopy/](http://www.kch.nhs.uk/services/services-a-to-z/endoscopy/)**

## **Sharing your information**

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit [www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk).

## **Care provided by students**

We provide clinical training where our nursing students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: [kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net).**

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Urgent and Planned Care  
Corporate Comms: 3631