

Capsule Endoscopy

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Capsule Endoscopy is a small ingestible capsule equipped with a miniature video camera that lets your doctor to examine the small intestine. It is an outpatient and non-invasive test to help diagnose and evaluate disorders of the small intestine such as unexplained bleeding, unexplained anemia, intestinal cancer, abdominal pain, ulcers, suspected Crohn's disease, Celiac disease, cancer. This test allows your doctor to examine the interior of the small intestine, previously visible only by surgery. The pictures taken by the capsule are sent to a small recording device you wear on your body. Your doctor will be able to view these pictures at a later time.

Preparation

In order to provide accurate visualization of your small intestine, which is 21 feet long, you will need to fast for 12 hours prior to the test, including water. Tell your doctor in advance about any medications you take including aspirin, bismuth subsalicylate products, ibuprofen, and other over-the-counter medications. Tell your doctor of presence of a pacemaker or defibrillator, previous abdominal or pelvic surgeries, previous history of bowel obstructions, hernias, inflammatory bowel diseases, endometriosis, or intra-abdominal adhesions. Your doctor may have you to do a small amount of bowel cleansing preparation prior to the test.

During the examination

You will first be prepared by the staff for the test by applying a sensor device to your abdomen with adhesive sleeves. Then the capsule endoscopy test begins when you ingest the small vitamin sized capsule with a glass of water. Pictures and data are acquired as the capsule passes through your digestive tract and transmitted to a data recorder worn on your belt for approximately eight hours. At the end the test, you will return to the office and the data recorder is removed from your body so the pictures and data recorded can be entered into a computer for the doctor to review. Spontaneous contractions by the digestive tract push the capsule through the digest tract, and it is passed naturally and painlessly from the body, usually within 24-48 hours.

You will be able to drink clear liquids after four hours and eat a light meal after six hours following swallowing the capsule. You should avoid doing rigorous physical activity or exercise during the test.

You should not be near an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) machine during the examination.

Benefits

Capsule endoscopy offers a simple, safe, and non-invasive test to evaluate the small intestine. It is performed on an outpatient basis and does not require sedation. It is convenient and allows patient to continue with normal daily activity.

Possible risks involved with capsule endoscopy examination

Capsule endoscopy is generally a very safe test. Even though complications can occur on very rare occasions, they are generally very rare with well trained, experienced, and qualified doctors that do this test. There is a rare potential of having the capsule stuck at a narrowed spot in the digestive tract. When this happens, it is usually due to a narrowing of the digestive tract due to scarring, inflammation, prior surgery, intra-abdominal adhesions, or tumor. Symptoms and signs of a stuck capsule may include abdominal bloating, abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting. You should notify your doctor immediately for any such concerns. It is very important not to disconnect the system during the test as this will affect the transmission of pictures and data to the data recorder.