



Capsule Endoscopy ("Pill Cam")

Capsule endoscopy, a non-invasive diagnostic procedure, has revolutionized how doctors examine the digestive system. Imagine swallowing a vitamin-sized capsule that contains a tiny camera, a light, and a transmitter. This is the essence of capsule endoscopy. As the capsule travels through your digestive tract, the camera takes thousands of pictures, which are then transmitted to a recorder worn on a belt around your waist. This innovative procedure allows doctors to visualize the entire length of your digestive tract, particularly the small intestine, an area not easily reached with traditional endoscopy procedures.

The Capsule Endoscopy Procedure

On the day of the procedure, you'll be asked to fast for at least 12 hours to ensure clear images. Once the recorder is connected and ready, you'll swallow the capsule with a sip of water. The capsule, no larger than a vitamin pill, contains a tiny camera, a transmitter, and a light. A slippery coating makes it easy to swallow. Once swallowed, you shouldn't be able to feel it.



The capsule takes about eight hours to travel through your digestive tract, capturing over 50,000 images. These images are transmitted to a recorder through sensors attached to your body. The recorder, about the size of a giant calculator, is worn on a unique sling or harness across your chest and shoulder.

No Sedation Required

One of the significant advantages of capsule endoscopy is that it does not require sedation. You can go about your day while the capsule does its job. However, strenuous exercise or heavy lifting should be avoided until the capsule has exited your body; you're also advised to avoid MRI machines, ham radios, and strong magnetic fields, such as those in airport or government building security areas, until the capsule is no longer in your body. You can use computers and phones safely.

The Importance of Capsule Endoscopy

Capsule endoscopy is particularly beneficial for examining the small intestine, an area that is not easily reached with traditional endoscopy procedures. Believe it or not, the average adult's digestive tract (from mouth to anus) is about 30 feet long. Conventional upper endoscopy involves passing a long, flexible tube with a video camera about 4 feet down your throat and

into the upper digestive tract. This allows direct examination of the esophagus, stomach, and the first part of your small intestine, the “duodenum.”

At the other end, colonoscopy visualizes the 6 feet of the large intestine or colon. The last few inches at the end of the small intestine can often be examined. However, this leaves about 20 feet of the small intestine out of the loop.

In contrast, capsule endoscopy allows for a direct view of the remaining 20 feet of the small intestine beyond the reach of upper endoscopy or colonoscopy.

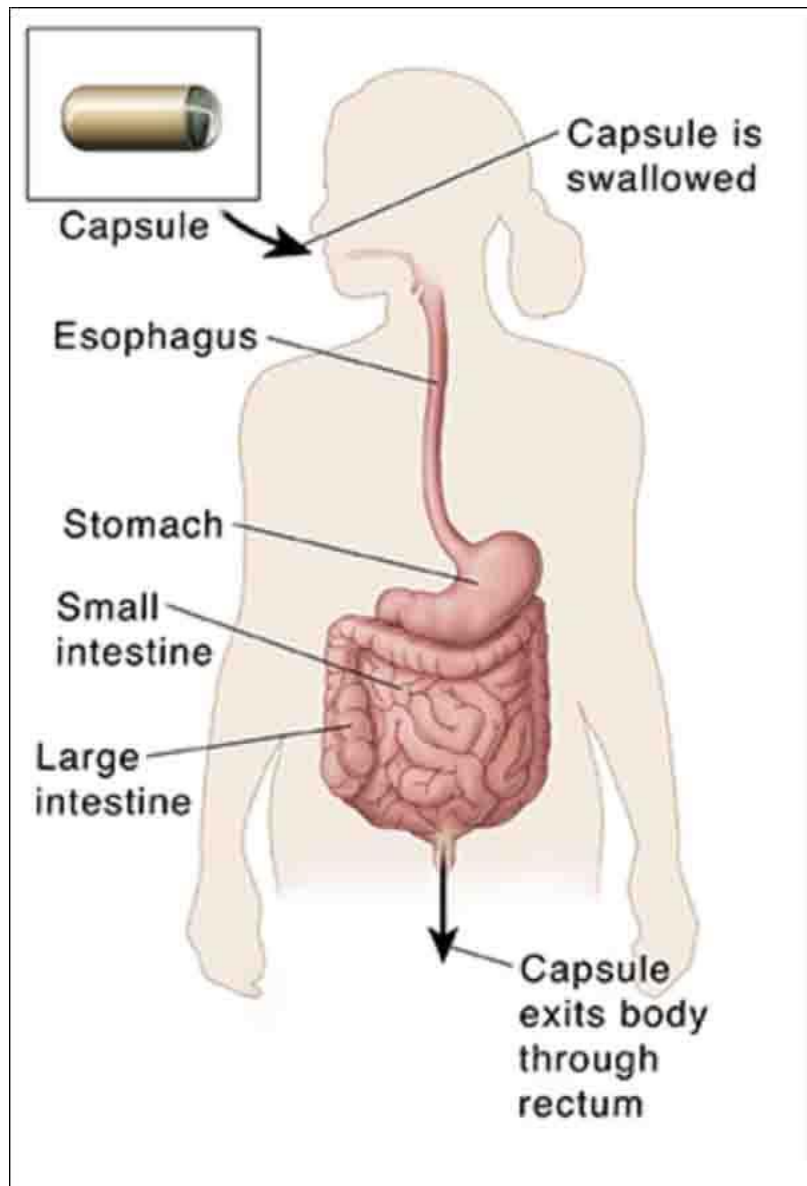
This procedure is used to diagnose various conditions affecting the digestive system. These include gastrointestinal bleeding, inflammatory bowel diseases like Crohn's and ulcerative colitis, cancer, celiac disease, and polyps. Capsule endoscopy can also help doctors visualize the colon interior in people who cannot tolerate sedation or other aspects of a colonoscopy.

After the Test

Once the capsule has completed its journey, it is naturally expelled from your body in your stool. You should contact your doctor if the capsule hasn't passed in a bowel movement within several days.

How Do I Obtain the Results?

After the exam images have been processed, the doctor will review the images captured by the capsule and any recommendations. Your referring physician will also be notified of the results. This may take up to two weeks.



Risks and Considerations

While capsule endoscopy is a safe procedure, there's a slight chance the capsule could become lodged in the digestive tract. This risk is higher in people with conditions like tumors, Crohn's disease, or previous surgery that causes narrowing in the digestive tract. Contact your doctor if the capsule hasn't passed in a bowel movement within several days.

The Future of Digestive Health

Capsule endoscopy represents a significant advancement in the field of gastroenterology. It provides a non-invasive, patient-friendly option for diagnosing and monitoring digestive conditions. As technology advances, procedures like capsule endoscopy will become increasingly important in helping us understand and manage our digestive health. Remember, always consult a healthcare professional if you have any digestive health concerns. They can provide the most accurate information and guide you toward the best action for your health needs.

Center For Digestive Health & Nutrition

725 Cherrington Parkway • Moon Township, PA 15108
412.262.1000 • www.gihealth.com • IG: @thedigestivetract

The Center for Digestive Health & Nutrition is a private medical practice comprised of experienced Gastroenterologists, Nurse Practitioners, and staff members dedicated to preventing and treating digestive disorders. Our physicians have been serving the needs of those in Western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas since 1977, having cared for tens of thousands of individuals with digestive problems. Our mission is to deliver high-quality gastroenterology services efficiently and cost-consciously. We realize the very sensitive nature of GI illness and understand the necessity to provide our services in an environment that stresses patient privacy and confidentiality and where patient satisfaction is the goal. Appointments can be conveniently scheduled online via our website above. Learn more about digestive issues on Instagram @thedigestivetract

DISCLAIMER: The information on this website is to provide general information. The information on this website does NOT reflect definitive medical advice, and self-diagnoses should not be made based on information obtained online. It is important to consult a physician for a consultation and examination regarding ANY and ALL symptoms or signs as they may signify a serious illness or condition. An accurate diagnosis and treatment plan should only be made by a qualified doctor to exclude a serious condition.