

AGA Patient Education Section

Small Bowel Capsule Endoscopy

A small bowel capsule endoscopy, or just capsule endoscopy, is a procedure to view your small intestine by having you swallow a capsule the size of a large pill, which has a camera inside. This capsule travels through your digestive system and sends pictures to a device worn around your waist, which saves them for later review by your gastroenterologist.

What Is a Capsule Endoscopy for?

A capsule endoscopy provides pictures of the inside of your digestive system, which cannot be seen through other endoscopic studies and x-rays. Your gastroenterologist uses images from this test to look for abnormalities in your small bowel or to check for progress following treatment for health issues like:

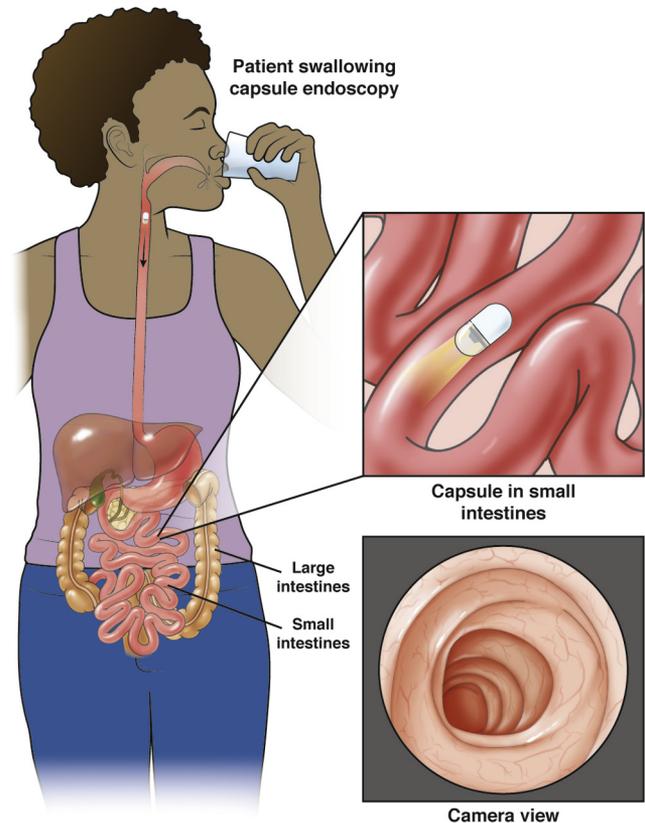
- Unexplained bleeding
- Unexplained iron deficiency anemia
- Polyps
- Tumors
- Celiac disease
- Crohn's disease
- Erosions (superficial ulcers)
- Other suspected small bowel diseases

Before Your Capsule Endoscopy

Follow the instructions provided by your doctor's office in preparation for this procedure. You may be instructed to list all your recent symptoms, medications, allergies, past medical problems, and evaluations and surgeries of your stomach or bowel. Usually patients are instructed not to eat or drink for 10 hours before this test. Your doctor may also prescribe a preparation to clean your small bowel. On the day of the test, wear loose-fitting, 2-piece clothing.

During Your Capsule Endoscopy

Sensors will be placed on your stomach and you will swallow the capsule. Occasionally, the capsule needs to be placed into the beginning of the small bowel with an endoscope. You will be provided with further instructions concerning your diet and bathing. The recording tool must stay close to your belly during the test. A small light on the recording tool will blink every time an image is taken. If you have a bowel movement during the test, check that the light is still blinking, if not, call your doctor right away.



After Your Capsule Endoscopy

You will return the recording tool and sensors to your doctor's office where the pictures will be reviewed by your gastroenterologist. The camera capsule will keep on moving through your digestive tract until it comes out during a normal bowel movement. You may not notice when the capsule passes out of your body. You do not need to retrieve it or return it to your doctor. Bad reactions from this test are rare, but you should call your doctor right away if you have trouble swallowing or breathing, are vomiting or have significant chest or abdominal pain. Do not have an magnetic resonance imaging test until after the capsule comes out in your stool.

For more information about small bowel capsule endoscopy, talk to your gastroenterologist and visit <https://www.gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/topic/small-bowel-capsule-endoscopy>.