

Video capsule endoscopy

This leaflet explains a video capsule endoscopy (VCE) and what to expect from this procedure. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Why am I having a video capsule endoscopy (VCE)?

The main reason for a video capsule endoscopy (VCE) is to examine the lining of the small intestine. This is an area which is difficult to examine with standard flexible endoscopes (devices used to look inside the body). Your doctor will explain why you are having a VCE. A VCE may help to investigate:

- iron deficiency anaemia (lack of iron in the body)
- unexplained bleeding in the stomach or intestines (that cannot be investigated with a standard endoscope)
- suspected coeliac disease and inflammatory bowel diseases
- abnormalities such as polyps (small growths), seen on CT or MRI scans.

What happens during a VCE?

You will swallow a small (23mm long) disposable capsule, roughly the size of a large vitamin capsule, with a drink of water containing a solution that dissolves any bubbles in the digestive juices. The capsule contains a camera, light source, battery and transmitter, which work together to take images of your gut. The capsule travels naturally through the small intestine and rest of the gastrointestinal tract and is passed in your poo. Usually you will not notice when you pass the capsule and it will flush away in the toilet.

You will also have to wear a data recorder which records what happens when the capsule is inside your body. Small sensor pads will be temporarily stuck onto the skin of your tummy with thin leads that pass the information into a data recorder box worn with a strap. The recording usually takes approximately eight hours to complete. Afterwards you will need to return to the hospital with the equipment.

What are the risks of a VCE?

A VCE is extremely safe and has few risks or complications. These will be discussed with you before the day of your procedure. Occasionally it is necessary to swallow a 'dummy' capsule (also known as a 'patency' capsule to test whether the actual capsule can successfully travel through the small intestines). Further information will be provided if this is the case.

Sometimes the intestines are slow and the capsule does not reach the colon within the eight hours. This will show on the video and we will contact you to arrange an x-ray within one week to see if the capsule is still in the small intestine.

If the dietary preparation has not worked or the bowel is not clean enough, the examination images may be inadequate. This may require a repeat procedure.

Occasionally, the capsule does not pass naturally and may become stuck in the gut. This may require the use of an endoscope to retrieve the capsule. Alternatively and very rarely, surgery may be required to remove the capsule and identify the cause of the capsule getting stuck. The signs of this are tummy pain, tummy cramps and vomiting. You will be given instructions about what to do in the rare event that this occurs.

How should I prepare for a VCE?

For a successful examination, it is important that the small bowel is clear of waste material. If the bowel is not completely clear it is possible to miss something or may mean the procedure may have to be repeated. You will therefore need to follow the instructions carefully on what to eat and drink before the VCE.

If you suspect you are pregnant or have an implanted cardiac device (ICD - this does not include pacemakers) please tell us as soon as possible as the procedure should **not** then be carried out.

It is not necessary to have someone with you for this procedure, but you may wish to talk this through with someone at home and have someone with you on the day you attend.

Medicines to stop before the VCE

Some medications can affect the quality of the images. If you have a long-term health condition requiring injections or tablets, please discuss the dietary instructions with your specialist nurse or doctor before you swallow the capsule.

Seven days before your appointment date stop taking:

Iron supplements, buscopan, colofac, mebeverine, imodium, codeine, morphine and loperamide. If you take codeine/morphine and are concerned about being able to stop, please discuss this with your doctor.

These drugs affect the gut and if the instructions are not followed it could affect the procedure and results. Please seek advice from your GP if needed.

Food and drink before the VCE

If there is food left in the stomach and small intestine it is hard to see clearly what the lining looks like and so the presence of something to explain your health problem may be missed. Please follow the instructions below to make sure that your small intestine is clean and clear:

On the day before your appointment:

- You may eat breakfast as usual but you must have finished eating by 8:30am at the latest.
- Your usual medications can be taken with water during the day.
- Follow the instructions in the box below, on what you can drink until 10pm on the day before your appointment. You must not eat or drink anything else until instructed to at your appointment.

This is what you can drink until 10pm on the day before your appointment:

YES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water• Black tea• Black coffee• Non fizzy soft drinks• Non fizzy energy drinks• <u>Clear</u> soup or stock (no solids in it)• Bovril or Marmite (one mug maximum as it is salty)• Clear fruit juice or vegetable juice with no bits.	NO: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Milk• Red or purple drinks• Alcohol• Any food after 8.30am the day before your procedure
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If you have diabetes

If you have tablet-controlled diabetes, take your morning dose but leave out the evening dose.

If you have insulin-controlled diabetes, take half your usual morning dose before breakfast and monitor your blood sugar more regularly. If your blood sugar level is low during the day, you can drink a non fizzy energy drink to correct this. Please discuss this with your specialist nurse or doctor if you have any further questions.

On the day of your appointment

- On the day of your appointment please be punctual. If you are running late please call the hospital on the number below in case the appointment has to be rescheduled.
- You should not eat or drink anything (including gum, sweets and mints) until instructed at your appointment.
- Do not smoke on the day of your appointment.
- Essential medicines can be taken with water only before 6am. Non-essential medicines can be postponed until you have a snack at lunchtime – full instructions will be given.
- If you are still at the hospital when you are able to eat, we can provide you with a sandwich but you may prefer to bring something with you
- If you have diabetes, please do not take your medicines in the morning but bring them with you.
- Please wear a loose top that buttons up or zips up at the front.

After swallowing the capsule

Please follow these instructions:

TIME	ACTIVITY
0hr:	Capsule swallowed. You can drink only water for four hours after swallowing the capsule. Do NOT smoke for the next 12 hours.
4 hours after swallowing:	You can have a light snack now (a small sandwich or <u>small</u> baked potato with filling) but no other food for another four hours. Drink plenty of fluids – milk is allowed from now on too. No alcohol.
8 hours after swallowing the capsule:	You can eat and drink as normal and take your medications as normal including any usual medications for diabetes.
At the time agreed	Return the equipment to the Endoscopy Unit Reception

A specialist will analyse the video recording and issue a report to the doctor who referred you to our service. This can take up to four weeks.

Useful sources of information

British Society of Gastroenterology (ESGE) Guidelines on Small-Bowel Capsule Endoscopy (BSG Endorsed): www.bsg.org.uk/clinical-guidelines/endoscopy/esge-guidelines-on-small-bowel-capsule-endoscopy-bsg-endorsed.html

Contact us

If you wish to change your appointment please call 020 7188 7188 (extension 50643).
If you need further information about the procedure please ring and leave a message with your contact details 020 7188 7188 (extension 56255).

If you have an urgent problem on the day please ring 020 7188 7188 (extension 54059 or 54060) (Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm). Outside these hours, in an emergency please call 020 7188 7188 and ask for the on-call gastroenterology doctor.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Leaflet number: 4298/VER1

Date published: September 2016

Review date: September 2019

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