

## Endoscopy department

# Understanding patency capsule test

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

Name: .....

Hospital number: .....

Your patency capsule is enclosed. You need to swallow this **24 hours before** your CT scan appointment at St Mary's Hospital.

You will be contacted by the CT department to book your scan date and time.

If you have any questions or concerns about your appointment or regular medication, please do not hesitate to contact: GI physiologist on **020 3312 1023 / 26681** or CT modality lead on **020 3312 6245**.

## Introduction

This leaflet is designed to help you prepare for your patency capsule test and answer any questions you may have.

**Please read this at least one week before your appointment and follow the instructions carefully.**

If you do not attend your appointment, we will refer you back to the healthcare professional who requested this investigation for you.

## What is a patency capsule test, and why is it needed?

A patency capsule is a pre-test before having a second procedure called a video capsule endoscopy (VCE). The patency capsule is the size of a large jelly bean, which is swallowed with a drink of water.

The capsule travels down the digestive system and 24 hours later the patient attends the hospital to be scanned in the imaging department. A patency capsule will identify if there are any blockages in the bowel, which may prevent a VCE from safely passing through.

If there is a blockage it would not be safe to proceed with the further investigation using VCE.

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## What is a patency capsule?

A patency capsule is a dissolvable pill that surrounds a small radio frequency identification (RFID) tag that can be identified by an X-ray or CT scan.

## Preparation before your test

Please follow the following instructions before you have the test:

- Do not eat or drink from midnight on the night before you swallow the capsule.
- If you have oral medication, it **MUST** be taken two hours before the test near
- If you have any special requirements, please inform the GI physiology or imaging department. You can find our contact details at the top of this leaflet.

## Starting the procedure

You need to swallow the capsule whole with a drink of water at 8am.

## During the test

- Continue with your regular activities – we recommend that you do some walking during the day.
- You can continue to eat as you normally would.
- The patency capsule will travel down the digestive system.
- You will be given an appointment at the hospital as you need to be scanned approximately 24 hours after swallowing the capsule.
- When we complete the scan, if the patency capsule is not detected, it means it has been excreted successfully.
- If the patency capsule is in your digestive tract the location will be identified on the CT scan.

Please note, the patency capsule will start to dissolve from 30 hours.

## After procedure

- If the capsule passed successfully, the GI physiologist will let your named consultant doctor know.
- The hospital will be in touch to arrange a video capsule endoscopy (VCE) appointment.

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## Does the patency capsule test have any risk?

The patency capsule endoscopy is a safe procedure, but like all medical investigations there is a small risk of complications.

The patency capsule starts dissolving 30 hours after you take it. If you have a narrowing in the bowel – although this is rare – it may be possible the capsule gets stuck and lead to a bowel obstruction.

Please tell the GI physiologist or endoscopy clinical lead immediately if you experience any unusual abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting

**DO NOT have an MRI scan when the capsule is inside your body as this could result in serious damage to your intestinal tract or abdominal cavity.**

## Further information

If you or your family have any questions, or if you become unwell in the days before the test please call and let us know so that we can rebook your scan.

## How do I get to the hospital?

You are advised to travel, if possible, by public transport. Car parking is severely limited and you may find it very difficult to find a place to park near the hospital.

The nearest tube stations to St Mary's Hospital are:

- Paddington – Bakerloo, Circle, District and Hammersmith & City lines
- Edgware Road – Bakerloo, Circle and District lines.

Buses that stop on Praed Street near the hospital are numbers 7, 15, 23, 36 and 436.

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 020 3312 7777.

You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf. Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street,  
London W2 1NY

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Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: 020 3312 1337 / 1349

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: [imperial.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.patient.information@nhs.net)

## Wi-Fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

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