

Video Capsule Endoscopy

What is video capsule endoscopy?

Video capsule endoscopy is a procedure that allows a doctor to examine your small intestine for sources of bleeding. It is especially helpful for diagnosing obscure bleeding, Crohn's Disease, malabsorption, unexplained abdominal pain, and cases of small bowel cancer.

How is it done?

For this procedure, you swallow a capsule that is less than an inch long (about 23 millimeters). Our Nurse Practitioner attaches sensors to your chest and connects them to a data recorder that you wear on a belt around your waist. The capsule contains a tiny video camera. As the capsule travels through your gastrointestinal tract, the camera takes pictures and sends them to the data recorder. After 8 hours, the patient returns to the office and our Nurse Practitioner removes the data recorder and uploads the recorded data for review by your physicians. The capsule passes out of your body in the stool in a day or two.

What are the advantages?

Video capsule endoscopy is becoming popular because it has several advantages over traditional endoscopy:

- It can show the entire small intestine and thus may be better at finding sources of bleeding.
- It is not invasive. In traditional endoscopy, a thin, lighted tube is inserted down your throat.
- It is painless, so you do not need to take pain medicine.
- You do not have to stay in the hospital.
- You have to fast for 12 hours before swallowing the capsule, but it does not require other preparation.

When should it not be used?

Video capsule endoscopy is generally safe and well tolerated. But it should not be used if you are known to have intestinal obstructions or narrowing (strictures) or abnormal connections or openings between two organs or parts of the body ([fistulae](#)).