



Capsule endoscopy (Pill Cam) patient information guide

This capsule endoscopy guide contains important information about your upcoming Pill Cam procedure, including bowel preparation instructions, fasting requirements, and what to expect before, during, and after your appointment at Moonee Valley Specialist Centre in Essendon.



Moonee Valley
SPECIALIST CENTRE
Gastroenterological and Related Care



What is capsule endoscopy?

Capsule endoscopy, also known as Pill Cam, is a procedure that uses a miniature camera capsule to examine the digestive tract.

The capsule is about the size of a vitamin pill and captures thousands of images as it travels naturally through your digestive system. These images are transmitted to a small data recorder worn around your waist during the procedure.

Capsule endoscopy may be recommended to investigate:

- Unexplained bleeding or iron deficiency
- Crohn's disease
- Polyps or tumours
- Ulcers or inflammation
- Parasites or angiodysplasia
- Small bowel abnormalities

This procedure may also be used as an alternative bowel cancer screening tool in some patients, depending on clinical recommendations.

Quick facts

Duration	Approximately 6–8 hours of monitoring
Anaesthesia	Not required
Fasting	Fasting and bowel preparation required
Recovery	No sedation recovery required
Results	Usually available within 1 week

Important things to remember

- Your digestive tract must be empty for the procedure to produce clear images.
- Follow all bowel preparation and fasting instructions exactly as provided.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing on the day of your procedure.
- Avoid MRI scans until the capsule has passed naturally from your body.
- Inform our team about all medications, medical conditions, swallowing difficulties, or previous bowel surgery before your procedure.
- Contact our rooms immediately if the recorder light stops blinking or changes colour during the procedure.

Preparation steps

• Day before procedure

After lunch, follow a liquid diet only and drink plenty of clear fluids throughout the day. Recommended clear fluids may include:

- Water
- Apple juice
- Clear broth
- Black tea or coffee without milk
- Clear electrolyte drinks
- Clear cordial without red or purple colouring

From midnight, do not eat or drink anything except essential medications with a small sip of water. Your specialist may also recommend bowel preparation similar to that for colonoscopy to improve image quality.

• 2 hours before procedure

Do not take medications within 2 hours before the capsule endoscopy unless advised otherwise by your healthcare provider.

• Day of procedure

Arrive in the morning for admission and equipment setup. You will swallow the capsule with water after receiving a small amount of Infacol solution. Once the capsule has been swallowed, you may leave the clinic and return later in the day for equipment removal. Wear loose-fitting clothing and avoid belts or restrictive garments around the waist area.

What to expect

Capsule endoscopy uses a small, swallowable camera capsule that travels naturally through your digestive tract, capturing images.

The capsule transmits images wirelessly to a recording device worn around your waist throughout the day. Your specialist later reviews these images to assess the digestive tract for abnormalities.

The capsule usually passes naturally during a bowel movement within 24–72 hours and does not need to be retrieved.

During the capsule endoscopy

- After swallowing the capsule, you may continue most normal daily activities while wearing the recording equipment.
- Check the blue light on the data recorder every 30 minutes. If the light stops blinking or changes colour, contact our rooms immediately.
- Avoid getting the recorder wet and avoid MRI machines, radio transmitters, metal detectors, and flying until the capsule has passed.
- You may usually drink clear liquids after 2 hours and eat a light meal after 4 hours unless advised otherwise by your specialist.

After the capsule endoscopy

- You will return to the clinic approximately 6–8 hours after swallowing the capsule to have the equipment removed.
- Once the equipment has been removed, you may resume normal eating and drinking unless instructed otherwise.
- Results are generally available within 1 week, and a follow-up appointment may be arranged to discuss your findings and management plan. A report will also be sent to your referring doctor.

Risks and safety of capsule endoscopy

- Capsule endoscopy is generally safe and well-tolerated in most patients. The procedure does not involve sedation or invasive instruments; recovery is usually minimal.
- Rarely, the capsule may be delayed or retained in the digestive tract, particularly in patients with bowel narrowing, Crohn's disease, or prior bowel surgery. Your specialist will review your medical history carefully before the procedure to reduce this risk.
- Following bowel preparation and fasting instructions carefully helps improve image quality and reduces the need for repeat testing.
- Until the capsule has passed naturally, MRI scans should be avoided. If you have an MRI scheduled within several days of the procedure, inform your healthcare provider.

Drink plenty of clear fluids during your bowel preparation, unless your specialist instructs otherwise. Failure to follow fasting and preparation instructions may affect image quality and could result in repeat testing.



Need to reschedule or have questions?

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