



Information for
patients and
carers

Capsule Sponge

What is a Capsule Sponge?

You have been given this information leaflet as you have acid reflux symptoms or Barrett's Oesophagus; a condition that means there are changes in the cells lining your food pipe (oesophagus). People with Barrett's Oesophagus have a slightly higher chance of developing oesophageal cancer and you will need to have a test every 3 years to look at any further changes in your food pipe.

A capsule sponge test is a quick, way to check on the health of your food pipe and involves swallowing a capsule the size of a vitamin tablet attached to a very fine string, which will be used to remove the capsule sponge.

Given your symptoms, it is important to check for changes to your food pipe, and it is for you decide whether to have a Capsule Sponge. The alternative is a gastroscopy if your referrer feels this is appropriate you will be added to the endoscopy waiting list. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the clinical Endoscopist team on telephone number: **07784225603**

Preparation for the test

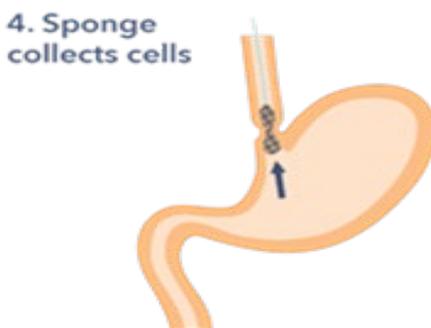
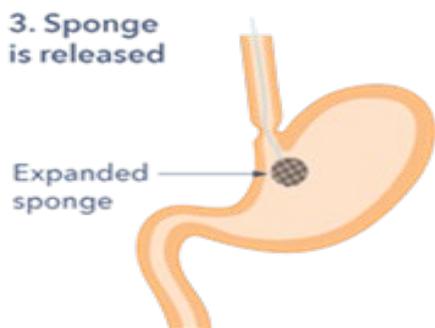
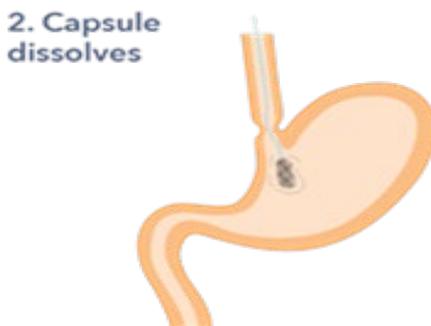
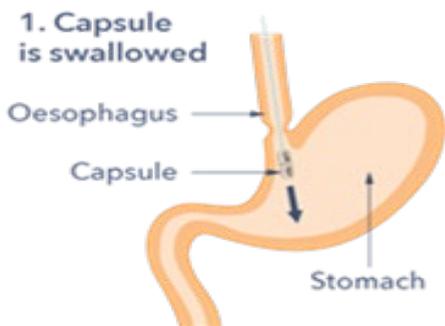
Please do not eat or drink anything for 4 hours prior to your test.

A 30-minute appointment will be arranged for you by the Capsule Sponge team. The test takes about ten minutes, and you will receive the results in about 6-8 weeks. On the day of the test, you will be advised how you will get the results. The test will take sample cells and occasionally, as with many other tests, may need to be repeated.

If you have diabetes, please ask for a morning appointment (as you cannot eat or drink for 4 hours before your appointment)

If you are on any blood thinning medication, please see blood thinning medication on page 6.

What the procedure involves:



When you attend your appointment, a nurse will go through the test with you and answer any questions you may have. The nurse will then ask

you to sign a consent form agreeing to the test. You will be given warm water to drink and asked to swallow the capsule which contains a small sponge.

We may ask whether you would be happy to be observed during the procedure. You have the right to decline if you are not comfortable with this.



The capsule is left in your stomach for up to 7 minutes until it dissolves, releasing the sponge. The nurse will remove the sponge by pulling gently on the thread. As it is pulled out, the sponge collects a sample of the cells lining your food pipe (oesophagus).

Is it safe to have the Capsule Sponge?

- Over 15,000 people have had the test with no serious side-effects reported
- Swallowing the capsule is not painful and most people have no problem doing so

- Some people may experience a mild sore throat for 24 hours which may last for a few days. Paracetamol and throat lozenges will usually help
- After the test, you can carry on with your day as normal
- There is a very small risk (less than 1 in 5,000) of the sponge becoming detached from the thread, or the nurse is unable to remove it. If this happens, you will be assessed to attend your local hospital for an endoscopy where the sponge will be easily removed
- There is a very small risk that you may have some bleeding. If this happens, you will be assessed by the doctor and clinical nurse. This is unlikely to need any intervention but if required an endoscopy at the local hospital could be performed to find and stop the bleeding

If you are referred for an endoscopy, this will follow standard NHS referral procedures.

After the capsule sponge

- You can go home straight after your test is completed
- If you have had a local anaesthetic spray, this causes a numbing in your throat which will soon go away
- For safety reasons do not to eat or drink for 1 hour after the test. After this you can eat and drink as normal

- If you have a sore throat after the test, suck a throat lozenge or sweet and take simple painkillers like paracetamol if required
- If your heartburn symptoms become worse, you should continue to take your heartburn medication as prescribed
- It is very unlikely you will experience any other symptoms, however if you experience any severe pain or bleeding you should contact the clinic using the contact details on your referral letter. Outside normal opening times (9am-5pm), please call 111 telling them that you have had a capsule sponge test

Your results

The sample that you provide will be looked at in a laboratory and tested by clinical or research teams to look for any sign of inflammation or cancerous changes.

The results of the test will be sent to your healthcare professionals who will share the results with you in about 6-8 weeks following your procedure any necessary treatment will be discussed with you.

Blood Thinning Medication

Warfarin

- You will need to have an INR test the week before your capsule sponge test
- Your INR must be 3.5 or less when you have the capsule sponge test

- If your INR is within your target range, then continue with your usual dose
- If your INR is not within your target range, please contact your anticoagulant clinic for advice as your dose may need to be adjusted
- If your INR result is above 3.5 contact your anticoagulant clinic or GP for advice

Anti-Platelet Medication

Continue your normal dose of clopidogrel, aspirin, prasugrel, ticagrelor or any other anti-platelet medication.

Other anticoagulants

You should stop any other anticoagulants the day of your capsule sponge test. e.g. Rivaroxaban, Apixaban, Edoxaban, Dabigatran.

Restart your medication the day after your capsule sponge test. Continue with your usual dose.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact Clinical Endoscopist Team on 01257 247108 or 07784225603

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk
www.heartburncanceruk.org
<https://cyted.ai/patients>
www.endosign.com

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Department: Endoscopy

Division: Diagnostic and Clinical Support Division

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