

Patient information

Heartburn Health Check

(for patients with persistent heartburn or Barrett's oesophagus)

Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been invited to have a Heartburn Health Check because you have spoken to your GP about persistent heartburn or because you have Barrett's oesophagus.

Patients who meet specific criteria will be offered a Heartburn Health Check instead of an endoscopy, as a less invasive alternative that uses a capsule sponge test to investigate your symptoms. If you are unable to attend your appointment, please inform us as soon as possible on **01284 713038**.

Please ensure you read this booklet and the enclosed consent form thoroughly.

What is a capsule sponge test?

A capsule sponge test helps your doctor to check the health of your oesophagus (food pipe). It involves swallowing a vitamin-pill sized capsule, used to collect cells lining the oesophagus for laboratory analysis. Your appointment will last up to 30 minutes, although the procedure itself only takes about 10 minutes, and you will be able to return home and carry out normal activities after your appointment.

Why should I have this test?

Heartburn and acid reflux are common, but occasionally can lead to changes in the cells that line your oesophagus that may become pre-cancerous. Identifying cell changes (dysplasia) early is important to ensure that conditions such as Barrett's oesophagus do not progress to cancer.

The capsule sponge test allows your doctor to quickly investigate any symptoms and help you manage them. If cell changes are detected, you will be referred for further investigation and we will be able to offer treatment earlier where it is needed. For more information visit <https://www.heartburncanceruk.org>

Currently endoscopy services are experiencing longer waiting times than usual. The capsule sponge test will allow you to be seen more quickly. If you decide not to have the capsule sponge test, you will be added to the endoscopy waiting list.

What is involved?

A 30-minute outpatient appointment will be arranged for you. The test itself takes about ten minutes, and uses an EndoSign[®] device, whereby a small sponge collects cells from your oesophagus. These cells are then looked at in a laboratory to check for signs of abnormalities. You will receive the results within a few weeks.

Before your appointment

You should not eat or drink for 4 hours before your appointment, but you can continue to take any daily medication with a small amount of water during this time.

Your doctor will provide guidance on taking any existing medication, such as blood thinners or diabetes medication before your appointment. **If you have diabetes or take Warfarin blood-thinning medication, you may receive additional instructions.**

At your appointment

When you attend your appointment, a nurse will take a brief medical history, 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. We may also ask whether you are happy to be observed during the procedure.

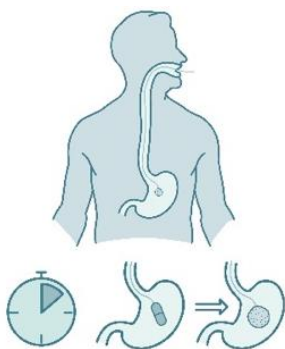
There is no need for sedation (medicine to help you relax or put you to sleep), although you may be offered a local anaesthetic spray.



The nurse uses an applicator to place the capsule on the back of the tongue. You will be given water to drink and asked to swallow the capsule.



The capsule is similar in size to a vitamin pill and contains a small sponge inside a vegan shell attached to a piece of strong, thin thread.



After swallowing, the capsule will stay in your stomach for 7 minutes until it dissolves, releasing a small soft sponge.



The nurse will gently remove the sponge by pulling on the thread. As it is pulled out, the sponge collects a sample of the cells lining your oesophagus (food pipe).

After your appointment

After the test, you can carry on with your day as normal. You may experience a mild sore throat after the test. Paracetamol and throat lozenges can help to soothe this.

If you had a local anaesthetic spray, it will cause a numb feeling in your throat that will go away after a short time. For safety reasons, you will be asked to not eat or drink for 30 to 60 minutes after the test. After this, you can eat and drink as normal.

Your cell sample will be sent to a laboratory and tested for signs of Barrett's oesophagus, inflammation or cancerous changes.

Are there possible side-effects?

- More than 17,000 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.
- There is a very small risk (less than 1 in 2,000) of the sponge becoming detached from the thread, or the nurse is unable to remove it. If this happens you will have a same-day 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. This has never been needed in more than 10 years of tests.
- Like all tests, the Heartburn Health Check may not always find all abnormalities. On very rare occasions, a serious abnormality might not be identified. If you have any questions about this, please contact the clinic using the contact details on your referral letter.

Consent form

If you decide to go ahead with the Heartburn Health Check, we will ask you to sign a consent form on the day. This confirms that you agree to have the test and that you understand what it involves. You should make sure you have read and understood all

the information you have been given. Once you have decided to have the test, bring the consent form with you to your appointment where it can be completed and signed before your procedure.

Results

The results of the test will be sent to your healthcare professional who will share the results with you around 4- 6 weeks after your procedure. Any necessary treatment, follow up or further investigation will be discussed with you and follow standard NHS referral procedures.

Contact us

If you have any questions or find that you cannot keep your appointment, please contact the endoscopy nurse practitioner from Monday to Friday (8.30am to 5.30pm) on 01284 713038 or 01284 713952 for any queries or concerns.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

