



This Family Education Sheet explains how to prepare for a patency capsule test and what to do after.

Key points

- Your child will swallow a pill to see how it travels through their body.
- If you don't see the capsule in their poop 30 hours after they swallow it, your child will need an X-ray.

What is a patency capsule test?

Your child swallows a large pill called a "patency capsule" (see Figure 1). This test helps us to see if an object the size of the capsule can pass through your child's intestine.

- **If the capsule passes through your child's body before it dissolves** (and you find it in their stool/poop), it means your child's stomach and intestines are wide enough for an object the size of a capsule to pass through.
- **If the capsule is still inside your child's body after 30 hours**, it dissolves into small pieces and passes through their intestine on its own.



Figure 1

How does a patency capsule test work?

- Your child swallows the capsule.
- The next day—up to 30 hours after the capsule was swallowed—your child will need to have an X-ray if the capsule is still inside their body.
- Your child's care team discusses the results and next steps with you. If the capsule is still in the body, the care team may recommend additional tests.

How do I prepare my child for the patency capsule test?

Important: Please let the care team know if your child has a milk allergy or barium allergy. They'll let you know if this test is safe.

1 week before the patency capsule test

- Your child can't have any products with barium. Talk with your care team if you have questions about which products may have barium.

Day of the patency capsule test

- Take your regular daily medications **after** you take the capsule unless your child's provider tells you otherwise.
- **8 hours before the procedure:** Your child can only have water, apple juice and clear Pedialyte® until **3 hours before the procedure.**
 - No solid food, formula, purees, hard candy, milk or gum are allowed.
 - Any thickener to feeds, including formula with added rice, SimplyThick® or Thick-It®, is considered a solid and must be stopped 8 hours before the procedure.
- **3 hours before the procedure:** Your child should not eat or drink anything.

What happens after my child swallows the patency capsule?

We'll give you a toilet hat and gloves. Your child should poop in the toilet hat. You should look for the capsule in the poop.

If you don't see the capsule 30 hours after swallowing it, your child will need an X-ray right away. This is because after 30 hours, the capsule starts to dissolve, and we need to see where it is in the body.

When can my child eat and drink again?

- **2 hours after swallowing the capsule:** Your child can drink liquids.
- **4 hours after swallowing the capsule:** Your child can have a light meal.
- **8 hours after swallowing the capsule:** Your child can go back to their normal diet.

When should I call my child's care team?

Contact your doctor's office right away if your child has:

- Bad abdominal (belly) pain
- Nausea (feeling sick to their stomach)
- Vomiting (throwing up)

Contact us

Boston: (617) 355-6172, option 3, 7 am–4 pm
For procedure and arrival times,
617-355-6172, option 1, 12 pm– 3 pm

Lexington: (781) 216-3000, 7 am–4 pm

Waltham: (781) 216-1285, 8 am–5 pm