



GIBRALTAR HEALTH AUTHORITY
MEDICAL INVESTIGATION UNIT

FLEXIBLE SIGMOIDOSCOPY

What is Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy is a procedure that enables your doctor to examine the lining of the rectum and portion of the colon (large bowel) by inserting a flexible tube that is about the thickness of your finger into the anus and advancing it slowly into the rectum and lower part of the colon.

What preparation is required?

The rectum and lower colon must be completely empty of waste material for the procedure to be accurate and complete. Your doctor will give you detailed instructions regarding the cleansing routine to be used. In general, preparation consists of one or two enemas prior to the procedure but may include laxatives or dietary modifications.

What about my current medications?

Most medications can be continued as usual. You should inform your doctor of all current medications as well as any allergies to medications. Drugs such as aspirin or anticoagulants are examples of medications whose use should be discussed with your doctor. You should alert your doctor if you require antibiotics prior to dental procedures, since you may need antibiotics prior to sigmoidoscopy as well.

What can be expected during flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is usually well tolerated and rarely causes much pain. There is often a feeling of pressure, bloating or cramping at various times during the procedure. You will be lying on your side while the sigmoidoscope is advanced through the rectum and colon. As the instrument is withdrawn, the lining of the intestine is carefully examined. The procedure usually takes anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes.

What if the flexible sigmoidoscopy shows something abnormal?

If the doctor sees an area that needs evaluation in greater detail, a biopsy (sample of the colon lining) may be obtained and submitted to a laboratory for greater analysis. If polyps (growths from the lining of the colon which vary in size) are found, they can

be biopsied , but usually are not removed at the time of the sigmoidoscopy. Polyps are of varying types; certain benign polyps, known as "adenomas," are potentially precancerous. Certain other polyps ("hyper plastic" by biopsy analysis) may not require removal. Your doctor will likely request that you have a colonoscopy (a complete examination of the colon) to remove any large polyp that is found, or any small polyp that is adenomatous after biopsy analysis.

What happens after a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

After sigmoidoscopy, the doctor will explain the results to you. You may have some mild cramping or bloating sensation because of the air that has been passed into the colon during the examination. This will disappear quickly with the passage of gas. You should be able to eat and resume your normal activities after leaving the medical unit.

What are possible complications of flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Complications after flexible sigmoidoscopy are rare. It is important for you to recognise early signs of any possible complication. Contact the Medical Investigation Unit Immediately on telephone 72266 ext: 2247, before 5 p.m.or the Accident and Emergency department on telephone 72266 ext: 2121 if you notice any of the following symptoms: *severe abdominal pain, fevers or chills or rectal bleeding of more than one-half cup. It is important to note that rectal bleeding can occur even several days after the biopsy.*

If you have any further questions about your need for a sigmoidoscopy please do not hesitate to speak to your doctor or endoscopy nurse before the procedure.

On the day of the appointment please bring all prescribed medications with you.

If you wish to be sedated for your flexible sigmoidoscopy, you must be collected from the Medical Investigation Unit and taken home by a responsible adult. *You should NOT drive or operate any machinery, drink alcohol, sign any important legal documents, look after neither small children nor return to work for the rest of the day, as sedatives may affect your judgement and reflexes for the following 24 hrs.*

If you cannot attend on the date given please contact The Medical Investigation Unit immediately on telephone 72266 ext: 2247, so that your appointment can be offered to another patient, Thank-You.

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**CONSENT FORM FOR
FLEXIBLE SIGMOIDOSCOPY**

NAME:..... **D.O.B:**...../...../.....

ADDRESS:.....

I confirm that I have understood and read the information given to me on Flexible Sigmoidoscopy and the preparation necessary for its procedure.

I hereby consent to undergo a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy of which the nature and risks involved have been clearly explained to me by my Endoscopist.

Dr / Mr.....

Signature:..... **Date:**...../...../.....

Name (print).....

ENDOSCOPIST

I confirm that I have explained a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy and such appropriate options as are available, and the type of sedation, to the patient / guardian / parent in terms which in my judgement are suite to the understanding of the patient / guardian / parent.

Signature:.....

Date:...../...../.....

Name (printed).....