

FLEXIBLE SIGMOIDOSCOPY – PATIENT INFORMATION

Date of Procedure.....

Admission Time.....

What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy and how is it performed?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a procedure to inspect the lower part of the large bowel using a thin, flexible tube introduced via the back passage.

An empty stomach is essential for the sedation, so you should have nothing to eat or drink for four hours before the examination. You may have your normal medications with a small sip of water.

Morning procedures – Fast from Midnight. Sips of water only in the morning.

Afternoon procedures – Fast for four hours before attending. Sips of water only.

Upon arrival at hospital, you may be given an enema to clear the lower part of the bowel.

An intravenous sedative is given prior to the procedure so that you will be sleepy and comfortable during the examination. The entire procedure usually takes between 5 and 10 minutes. You will not be in any pain or discomfort.

The week before the flexible sigmoidoscopy:

- Notify your doctor if you are pregnant, allergic to medication or latex, have a cardiac pacemaker or heart valve disease.
- If you are on medication for diabetes (tablets or insulin) or if you are on blood thinning medication such as Aspirin, Plavix, Iscover or Warfarin/Coumadin, you must discuss this with your doctor at least one week prior to the procedure.
- Stop taking iron tablets or anti-diarrhoeal medications 7 days prior to your procedure.
- All other regular medications can be continued.

What happens after the procedure?

Following the flexible sigmoidoscopy, you will remain in the hospital recovery area for approximately two hours until the effect of the medication wears off. You may experience slight discomfort or bloating.

Because the sedation given may interfere with your judgement or ability to concentrate, you should not drive a motor vehicle, travel on public transport alone, operate dangerous machinery or sign important documents for the remainder of the day. It is necessary to arrange for a relative or friend to take you home from the hospital and stay with you.

If you develop severe or persistent abdominal pain, fever, vomit blood, excessive bleeding from the back passage or any other symptoms of concern, you should contact your doctor immediately or go to the nearest hospital's Emergency Department.

What are the risks of flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Any medical procedure carries some risk but flexible sigmoidoscopy is generally considered a safe procedure and complications are rare. Potential complications may include:

- Reaction to the sedation / anaesthetic
- Bowel perforation (estimated risk is approximately 1 in 10,000).
- Major bleeding (estimated risk is 1 in 3300 for biopsies and 1 in 500 for removal of polyps).

Although very rare, perforation or major bleeding is potentially serious and may require urgent surgery.

If you wish to have a more detailed discussion about potential risks, please ask your doctor prior to the procedure.