

# Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

## What is a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a procedure that allows your doctor to examine the rectum and lower colon (sigmoid). A sigmoidoscope is a flexible tube with a light on the end connected to a video monitor.

## Will there be any discomfort? Is any anesthetic needed?

The procedure can be uncomfortable. To make the procedure more comfortable, intravenous sedation will be given by an anesthesiologist.

If you prefer, this procedure can be done without sedation. You may experience cramping during the procedure as the air is used to expand the bowel.

## What are the potential complications of Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is considered to be a relatively safe procedure and serious complications are rare. These include bleeding, perforation (injury to the bowel wall), adverse reaction to anesthetic, etc. You will also find information about the risks in the sheets provided to you by your specialist. If you have any additional questions, you will have an opportunity to ask them pre-procedure.

## How do I prepare for the Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Before coming for your flexible sigmoidoscopy, you will be given detailed instructions from your doctor regarding the bowel cleansing for this procedure. Please follow them carefully.

If you expect sedation to be given, your stomach must be completely empty. You will be provided with an instruction sheet, "**Preparing for Your Endoscopy Procedure**". Please read and follow the instructions carefully.

You will receive several documents from your specialist in advance that you will need to review and/or fill in. Please make sure you provide as much information as possible on your **RVH Anesthetic Questionnaire** and **Pre-Surgery Medication Review**. It is important that your medication list is accurate. You can ask your pharmacist to help, if needed. You can also bring your medications with you to show to the admitting nurse.

## What if the doctor finds something during the procedure?

Your doctor may take a biopsy or perform another intervention during the procedure, e.g. remove a polyp. You will be informed of what was done. The pathology results usually take a few days to come back and your specialist will contact you about the findings, if appropriate. A copy of the endoscopy procedure report and the pathology report will be sent to the referring doctor and your family physician.



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## **What happens in the hospital when I arrive for my Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?**

You will be asked to arrive at the hospital 1.5 hours before your scheduled appointment time. When you arrive, you will register with a clerk at the Central Registration on the second floor.

You will be admitted into Endo Fast Track area. A nurse will review your completed paper work with you and take your medical history.

When the endoscopist is ready to perform your procedure, a nurse will take you to the procedure room. Please be aware that, although we do our very best to follow the schedule and do all procedures on time, there is always an element of unpredictability when medical procedures are concerned and you may have to wait longer than expected for your turn.

Following the procedure you will be transferred back to Endo Fast Track on a stretcher. This is where you will recover from your procedure.

You will have an opportunity to speak to your specialist after the procedure (before discharge) or an office follow-up appointment will be made to review the findings.

You will also receive a sheet with the findings and a post-procedure instruction sheet to take home with you.

Your responsible adult/driver must come to the Endo Fast Track area to pick you up. You must have someone to stay with you for the remainder of the day and the subsequent night. The person taking you home will be asked to sign a document acknowledging these recommendations. You are not allowed to drive until the following morning.

## **When should I call the doctor?**

You may experience a small amount of rectal bleeding following your procedure if biopsies were taken or polyps were removed. This is normal but if bleeding continues or is excessive, please contact your doctor or go to the nearest Emergency department.

