



Information About Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

What is Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a procedure that allows your doctor to examine the lining of the anus, rectum, and lower part of the large bowel (sigmoid and descending colon) using a thin, flexible tube with a small camera (sigmoidoscope). This test helps diagnose causes of symptoms such as bleeding, pain, or changes in bowel habits and can identify inflammation, polyps, or tumours.

Why is Flexible Sigmoidoscopy Performed?

Your doctor may recommend this procedure if you experience:

- Rectal bleeding or blood in your stools
- Persistent abdominal or pelvic pain
- Changes in bowel habits, such as diarrhoea or constipation
- Screening for colorectal cancer or follow-up of abnormal findings
- Diagnosis of inflammatory bowel disease or diverticulitis

How to Prepare

- **Fasting:** If sedation is planned, you will need to fast (no food or drink) for 6–8 hours before the procedure.
- **Bowel Preparation:** A rectal enema is usually administered on the day of your procedure to clean the lower bowel. This is often done after you arrive at the clinic, so you don't need to bring the enema with you.
- **Medications:** Inform your doctor if you take blood thinners, diabetic medications, or have allergies. You may need adjustment of some medicines before the procedure.
- **Transport:** Arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure because sedation will affect your alertness.

What Happens During the Procedure?

You will lie on your side or back. After sedation or anaesthesia is given, the doctor will gently insert the sigmoidoscope through your anus and slowly advance it to examine approximately one-third of your large bowel. The camera sends live images to a monitor, allowing detailed inspection. Biopsies or polyp removal may be performed as needed. The procedure typically lasts 20–30 minutes.

After the Procedure

- You will be monitored in recovery until sedation wears off.
- Mild bloating, pressure, or cramping may be experienced temporarily.
- You should not drive or operate machinery for the rest of the day.
- Your doctor will provide an initial summary of findings and arrange follow-up as needed.
- Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you experience severe abdominal pain, fever, rectal bleeding, or other concerning symptoms.

Risks and Complications

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is generally safe, though risks include:

- Bleeding from biopsy or polyp removal (may occur up to 10 days post-procedure)
- Perforation (tear) in the bowel wall, which might require surgery (<1 in 1000 cases)
- Infection or adverse reaction to sedation (rare)

Your doctor will discuss the risks specifically related to your health before you give consent.

Important Patient Information

You will be asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the procedure, confirming that:

- You understand the procedure, benefits, and potential risks
- You have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received answers
- You consent to any photographs or recordings that may be made during the procedure for clinical purposes.

Your comfort and safety are our priority. Please follow all preparation instructions carefully and contact us should you have any questions or concerns.
