

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy Information Guide

Your doctor has determined that you should undergo a procedure called a **Flexible Sigmoidoscopy** on the following date to enable further evaluation of your condition:

APPOINTMENT DATE: / / **AT** **AM / PM**

This information guide has been prepared to help you understand the procedure. It includes answers to questions most frequently asked by patients. Please read it carefully. Please feel free to ask your doctor any additional questions before you undertake the procedure.

IMPORTANT

- You must organise a driver and someone to look after you post procedure. The sedatives used for this procedure will mean that you are **LEGALLY** under the influence of a mind altering drug for a period of 12 hours. It is best not to work on the day of the examination.
- You must cease all food and drink for 8 hours prior to your procedure.

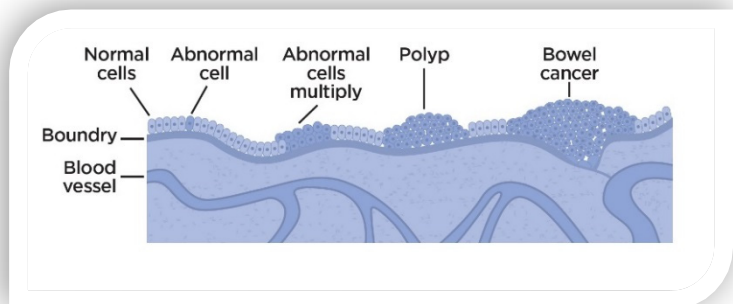
What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy allows inspection of the lining of the anus, rectum and lower part of the colon. It uses a flexible tube with a 'video camera' at the tip. The instrument is about 1cm in diameter. The colon (large intestine) is approximately 1.5 to 1.8 metres in length; a flexible sigmoidoscopy examines only the last 30 to 60 cm. This last part of the colon, just above the rectum is called the sigmoid colon.

Why have a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy exam can help your doctor explore possible causes of abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, changes in bowel habits, chronic diarrhea, and other intestinal problems. The procedure is used to look for early signs of colorectal cancer. In some individuals with a family history, this may also be an appropriate test to check for bowel cancer.

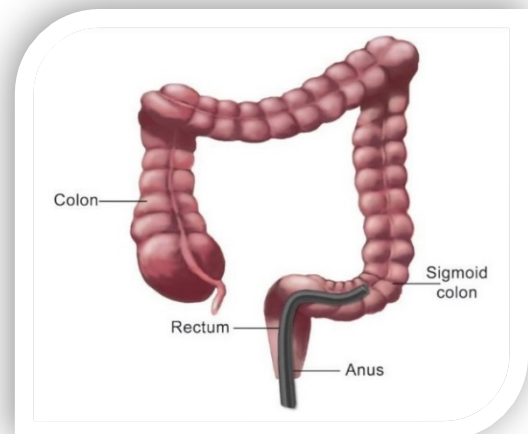
As cancer of the bowel can arise from pre-existing polyps it is recommended that all polyps found at the time of a sigmoidoscopy be removed. Most polyps can be removed (i.e. Polypectomy) during a sigmoidoscopy. If you have any queries or reservations about this, please discuss this with your doctor prior to being sedated.



How is flexible sigmoidoscopy performed?

A sigmoidoscopy is performed under sedation, as a day only procedure. Once anaesthetic sedation is given, the doctor inserts the flexible colonoscope ('scope') through the anus and slowly guides it into the colon whilst air is inflated into the bowel to expand it and allow for careful examination. A small camera in the end of the scope transmits a video image to a monitor, allowing the doctor to carefully examine the intestinal lining.

Depending on the findings, biopsies may be taken and sent to pathology. The doctor and medical staff monitor your vital signs during the procedure. The procedure itself takes about 10 to 20 minutes.



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How do I prepare for a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Your doctor will tell you what preparation is required, however as the procedure is performed under sedation, you will need to fast and refrain from drinking for a period of 8 hours prior to the procedure. Usually, an enema (a solution that is inserted into the rectum to clean the lower bowel) is the only preparation required.

What do I do prior to the procedure?

- Complete and return all pre-admission paperwork well prior to your scheduled appointment; this includes informing the Centre of all medical conditions and any medications or supplements taken regularly;
- Familiarise yourself with the patient information brochure provided to you prior to your procedure. This provides all the necessary details regarding the hospital facility and what to bring on the day;
- You will need to fast and refrain from drinking. **HAVE NO FOOD OR DRINK FOR 8 HOURS** prior to your appointment time;
- Prescribed medications should be taken as per normal with a small sip of water up to 2 hours prior to your procedure. **DO NOT** take any medication within **2 HOURS** of arriving for your procedure; and
- Arrive at the Centre dressed in comfortable, loose fitting clothing (e.g. shirt and pants or shirt and skirt etc.) Further information is provided in the patient information brochure.

IMPORTANT - Because of the sedation given, you are **NOT** legally allowed to drive for the rest of the day and **MUST** be accompanied home. You must **NOT** drive a car, travel via taxi or on public transport alone, operate machinery, sign legal documents, or drink alcohol on the same day after the procedure. You are required to have a friend or relative take you home and stay with you. Full recovery is expected by the next day.

It is anticipated that you will be at the Southern Endoscopy Centre for approximately **2-3 hours**.

Any special instructions (if any) are provided below:

What are the possible complications and associated risks?

Although complications can occur, complications arising from a flexible sigmoidoscopy are very uncommon. The chance of complications depends on the exact type of procedure that is being performed and other factors including your general health. Most surveys report complications of 1 in 1,000 examinations or less.

Perforation (making a hole in the bowel) or major bleeding from the bowel is rare, but if it occurs, you may require surgery. When operations such as removal of polyps are carried out at the time of the examination, there is a slightly higher risk of perforation or bleeding from the removed site. If there is a suspicion of a perforation after your procedure the doctor may decide to transfer you to hospital for further care. If an ambulance is required the associated fees will be payable by you or your health fund.

Extremely rarely, individual patients may also inhale some fluid that may still be present in the stomach (resulting in pneumonia).

Complications that can also occur from a reaction to sedatives used, although they are uncommon. If you wish to have full details of rare complications explained to you in more detail please speak to your doctor prior to the procedure.

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What happens after the flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Following the procedure, you will remain in recovery for at least an hour. You will usually be given something light to eat and drink once you are awake. The doctor will then provide you with a brief overview of your results and let you know if you require any follow up appointment at our Centre or with your local GP.

It is very important that you do not try and get out of bed until instructed to do so by nursing staff. You will still be affected by the sedation even after you think it has worn off. Very rarely you may pass a small amount of blood following the procedure.

Following your discharge and in the unlikely event that experience any of the following symptoms in the hours or days after the procedure, you should contact our Centre or your GP's rooms immediately:

- Severe abdominal pain;
- Black, tarry motions;
- Persistent bleeding from the anus (more than a cup full);
- Fever; or
- Other symptoms that cause you concern.

Sterilisation of the instruments

In accordance with the Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA) guidelines, our Centre ensures that all colonoscopes and equipment used during procedures are completely cleaned and disinfected and that all reusable medical devices/instruments are sterilised between each patient so that there is no risk of transmission of any serious diseases.

The Centre also maintains nationally recognised AS/NZS ISO 9001 certification and has full NSQHS accreditation as part of our ongoing commitment to the delivery of quality care and service to our patients.



Thank you for choosing the Southern Endoscopy Centre. If you have any further questions, comments or concerns please don't hesitate to contact the Centre on **8294 9355**.