



Name: _____

Day: _____ Date _____ Admit at: _____

Hospital: _____

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy: Patient Information Sheet

What is flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a procedure used to see inside the lower part of the large bowel (colon). This allows direct inspection of the lining of the bowel and gives important information about the possible cause of your symptoms and help to determine the best treatment. It is possible during the procedure to obtain small samples of tissue for examination under a microscope or to remove pieces of abnormal bowel tissue.

Preparation for flexible sigmoidoscopy

If you are taking iron tablets cease these five days before your flexible sigmoidoscopy. Special arrangements are needed for people with diabetes, heart murmurs or artificial heart valves or taking Warfarin.

On the day of the flexible sigmoidoscopy take your usual tablets with only a sip of water. If you are diabetic please bring your morning dose of insulin or tablets with you.

Fast for 5 hours before your appointment (no food or drink).

How is flexible sigmoidoscopy performed?

When you arrive at the hospital you will be given an enema to clean out the lower part of your large bowel. You will be given a sedative through a vein in the arm just prior to the procedure to make you more comfortable and slightly drowsy. The sigmoidoscopy is a long and flexible tube about the thickness of the index finger. It is inserted through the anus and then gently maneuvered along the large bowel. The procedure takes about 15 minutes.

Safety/Risks

Serious complications of flexible sigmoidoscopy are uncommon, occurring in about 1 in 5000 examinations. The more serious complications include major bleeding or perforation in the bowel, and are generally more common following removal of polyps. Occasionally, these complications may require treatment by blood transfusion or surgery.

Afterwards

You will be taken to the recovery area to rest until the effects of the sedative have disappeared. This will generally take 1 – 2 hours. If you have severe abdominal pain, fever, bleeding or other new symptoms after the procedure then you should mention this immediately to the staff in recovery. It is also possible that these symptoms might develop a few days after the procedure and if this is the case then you should contact your doctor immediately for advice. When you are fully awake, you will be informed of the results of the test.

IMPORTANT:

Please be prepared to stay at the hospital for approximately 4 hours.

Because of the sedatives you will be given, you must not drive a car, sign important legal documents, or work with dangerous machinery for 24 hours after the procedure. Please make arrangements for a responsible adult to accompany you when you leave hospital and stay with you overnight.