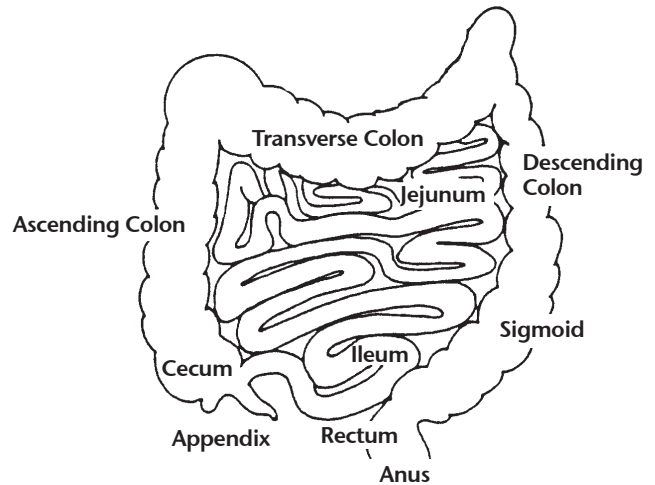


Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

(Exam of your sigmoid colon with a flexible tube)

What is flexible sigmoidoscopy?

This is a test that allows your doctor to closely check the lining of the rectum and a part of the colon (large bowel). While you are lying on your side, a flexible tube (about the thickness of your finger) is passed into the anus and advanced slowly into the rectum and lower part of the colon. You may feel some pressure, bloating or cramping at various times during the test. As the tube is withdrawn, the lining of the intestine is carefully examined. The test usually takes 5 to 15 minutes.



How do I prepare for this test?

The rectum and lower colon must be completely empty of stool for the test to be accurate and complete. Your doctor will give you instructions on how to cleanse your bowel before the test. You can take most of your medicines as usual before the test, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

What if something abnormal is found?

If the doctor sees an area that needs to be looked at more closely, a biopsy (sample of the colon lining) may be taken and sent to a laboratory. If polyps (growths from the lining of the colon) are found, a biopsy may be done but the polyps are usually not removed during this test.

What are polyps?

There are many types of polyps. Certain benign polyps may be precancerous and need to be removed. Other polyps may not need to be removed. Your doctor may advise you to have a colonoscopy (a complete exam of the colon through a scope) to remove certain polyps.

What happens after the test?

Your doctor will explain the results to you. You may feel some mild cramping or bloating from air that has been passed into the colon during the exam. This will disappear quickly when you pass gas. You will be able to eat and return to your normal activities after the exam.

What are the possible complications of flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Possible complications include perforation (tear through the bowel wall) and bleeding from the site of the biopsy. Complications are rare, but **call your doctor if you notice any of these signs of possible problems:**

- Severe abdominal (belly) pain
- Fever and chills
- Rectal bleeding (more than one-half cup of blood). Rectal bleeding can occur several days after a biopsy.

Questions? Please talk with your endoscopy nurse or your doctor before your test.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.