



PATIENT INFORMATION

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (Picolax)

This information is for patients who are having a flexible sigmoidoscopy. It tells you what is involved and any significant risks which may occur. The test itself will last about 10-15 minutes and you will normally be able to go home approximately 1 hour later.

What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is the name given to the examination of the lower part of your large bowel (colon). A thin, highly flexible tube (colonoscope) is passed gently into your back passage (anus) and manoeuvred around the lower part of your bowel. This will give the doctor a clear detailed image of your bowel.

What does the examination involve?

- The Endoscopist doing the examination will discuss it with you and ask you to sign a consent form confirming that you understand and agree to go ahead with it. You are free to ask for more information at any time.
- You may need to undress and wear a hospital gown along with a dressing gown. You will be offered disposable shorts to wear.
- You may be offered Entonox (gas and air). Then with you lying on your left hand side the Endoscopist will gently insert the endoscope into your anus and up into the bowel. **This test may cause some discomfort** due to the bowel being gently inflated to expand it so that the lining can be seen clearly. We now use carbon dioxide (CO₂) instead of air to do this, and this has proved to be much more comfortable.
- A **biopsy** (a small sample of the bowel lining) may be taken during the flexible sigmoidoscopy to be sent off to the laboratory for further testing. You will not feel this being done.
- The nurse will be with you during your test.
- At the end of the test the colonoscope is easily removed.

How do I prepare for the test?

If you take Insulin for your diabetes, please inform the diabetic nurse on ☎ (01803) 655525.

If you take tablets for your diabetes – **DO NOT** take them if you are not eating
If you are on Warfarin / Clopidogrel please inform the Endoscopy Unit on ☎ (01803) 654864 / 655955

It is important for this test that your lower bowel is empty. In order to achieve this please read and follow the instructions below:

You will receive two sachets of PicoLax. Please follow our advice carefully in order to ensure an empty bowel, this will allow a complete examination. When taking this preparation some intestinal cramping is normal. If you feel clammy and faint or if you vomit please take no more preparation and ring the Endoscopy Unit helpline on ☎ (01803) 654863 or your own GP for advice.

5 days before flexible sigmoidoscopy _____

If you take iron tablets or medications to control diarrhoea please stop taking them until after your flexible sigmoidoscopy. You should continue to take any other medication.

3 days before and until 24 hours before your appointment _____

Follow the advice on this leaflet, continue to eat **normally** but avoid high-fibre foods and choose low-fibre alternatives. You may find the information below, helpful in choosing your diet during your preparation for your bowel examination.

Choose	Avoid
Cereals: cornflakes®, Rice Crispies®, Ricicles®, Sugar Puffs®, Coco Pops®	Wheat Bran®, All Bran®, Weetabix®, Shredded Wheat®, Oat Bran®, Branflakes®, Wheatflakes®, muesli, Ready Brek®, porridge
white bread (you may use butter / margarine)	wholemeal, high-fibre white, soft grain or granary bread, oatbread
white pasta, white rice	wholemeal pasta, brown rice
white flour	wholemeal or granary flour, wheatgerm
potatoes (no skin)	fruit and vegetables
Savouries: chicken, turkey, fish, cheese and eggs	all red meats
Puddings, pastries, cakes, etc: milk puddings, mousse, jelly (not red), sponge cakes, madeira cake, Rich Tea®, Marie® or wafer biscuits	those containing wholemeal flour, oatmeal, nuts, dried fruit, etc. fruit cake, Ryvita®, digestives or Hobnob® biscuits
Preserve and sweets: sugar, jelly jam, jelly marmalade, honey, syrup, lemon curd. Fruit Pastilles®, wine gums, Jelly Babies®	jam or marmalade with pips, skins and seeds, sweets and chocolates containing nuts and / fruit muesli bars
Soups: clear or sieved soups	chunky vegetable, lentil or bean soups.
Miscellaneous: salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard, gelatine, salad cream, mayonnaise	nuts, Quorn®, fresh ground peppercorns, houmous

For morning appointments

2 days before procedure_____

- Continue your low-fibre diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

1 day before procedure _____

- Take the first sachet of Picolax at **8am** and the second at **4pm**.
- Continue with the low fibre diet, but stop all solid food 24 hours before your appointment time.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

For afternoon appointments

2 days before procedure_____

- Continue your low-fibre diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids

1 day before procedure_____

- Take the first sachet of picolax at **4pm (you will take your second sachet tomorrow morning)**.
- Stop all solid food 24 hours before your appointment time.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

On the day of your procedure_____

- Take your second sachet of picolax at **8am**

To prepare the picolax

Stir the contents of the sachet into a cup or glass of cold water and drink once the powder is dissolved. Over the following 2 hours, drink a litre of clear fluid. Following this you will experience a period of frequent bowel actions and diarrhoea. You may find that applying a small amount of Vaseline® / Sudocreme® to your back passage (anus), prevents discomfort during the bowel preparation.

It is essential that you drink plenty of clear fluids right up until your appointment time to avoid becoming dehydrated. Please avoid drinks containing milk or cream. Clear soups are allowed as long as they don't contain thickening agents or solids.

You are welcome to bring a bottle of soft drink to your appointment.

Suitable clear fluids

Tea / coffee (no milk)	Apple juice	All squashes/fizzy drink
Lucozade®	Cranberry/pomegranate	Honey & lemon
Fruit / herbal teas	Grape juice (white)	Oxo®/Marmite®/Bovril®

Also: Jelly babies®, wine gums, fruit gums, Glacier® fruits/mints.

What will happen when I arrive?

An endoscopy nurse will care for you from your arrival through to your discharge from the Unit. The nurse will explain the test to you and check your details including blood pressure and pulse. You will need to change into a hospital gown.

Jewellery and decorative piercing should ideally be removed. If you cannot remove your jewellery, it can be covered with tape, but please inform us when you see the nurse on the day of your procedure. Please inform us also of any coloured tattoos.

What happens after the examination?

- You will be taken to the recovery area and allowed to get dressed.
- Your nurse will speak to you after the test but biopsy results will be reviewed within a few days. If you have not heard from the Consultant after 3 weeks, you can call your GP surgery for any biopsy results.
- You will be offered a drink and be discharged home as soon as you are ready to go.
- You will be given a copy of your report, which we will also send on to your GP.

Are there any risks?

This examination is very safe however there is a small risk of perforation, which is a small tear in the bowel (1 in 2,500 risk).

Please speak to the Endoscopist before the examination if you have any worries about these risks.

Useful contacts

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact:

The Endoscopy Unit
☎ Tel (01803) 654864/655955
(8.30am – 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday)

If you have any urgent concerns outside of these hours
please phone the switchboard
☎ Tel (01803) 614567
and ask for bleep number **110**

Torbay Hospital is a Regional Training Centre for Endoscopic Procedures.

Doctors training in Endoscopy at many different levels attend our lists and will be involved in your care under the direct supervision of experienced Consultants.

If you do not wish to be involved in training these experts of the future, please let us know by contacting our Booking Office on the numbers above.