



PATIENT INFORMATION

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (Enema)

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. This will not cause you any pain.
- The nurse will be with you during your test, you will be able to talk to them if you need to.
- At the end of the test the colonoscope is easily removed.

How do I prepare for the test?

If you are diabetic or on Warfarin / Clopidogrel please inform the Endoscopy Unit on ☎ (01803) 654864 / 655955.

It is important for this test that your lower bowel is empty. To make sure that your bowel is empty it is necessary for you to have an enema. This will be carried out by a nurse once you arrive in the Unit. Continue to take your regular medication. You do not need to starve for this test.

What is an enema?

A nurse will give you an enema which is a solution inserted into your bowel through your back passage (anus) to cleanse your lower bowel.

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 able to get dressed straight after the test.
- Your nurse will speak to you after the test but any biopsy results will take a few days to be available.
- 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.

How will I feel when I go home?

- You may have some discomfort for the rest of the day in the form of wind, bloating, and may have a little bleeding but this will pass.
- You may eat and drink as normal when you leave the unit.


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.