



This document will give you information about a flexible sigmoidoscopy. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

### What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is a procedure to look at the inside of the left, lower part of your colon (large bowel) using a flexible telescope (see figure 1). A flexible sigmoidoscopy is a good way of finding out if there is a problem in the lower part of your large bowel.

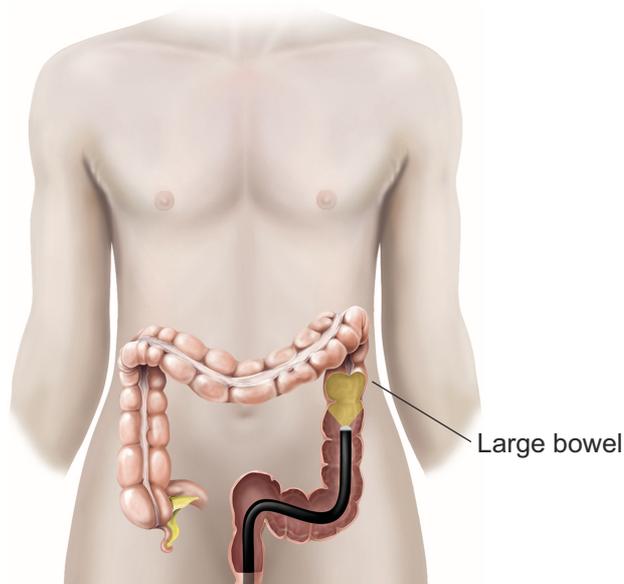


Figure 1

A flexible sigmoidoscopy

Sometimes a polyp (small growth) is the cause of the problem and the endoscopist may be able to remove it during the procedure.

### Are there any alternatives to a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Other options include a colonoscopy, a barium enema (an x-ray test of your large bowel) or a CT colography (a scan of your large bowel).

### What does the procedure involve?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy usually takes 15 to 20 minutes.

The endoscopist will place a flexible telescope (endoscope) into your back passage. Air will be blown into your large bowel to help the endoscopist have a clear view. The endoscopist will be able to look for problems such as inflammation or polyps. They will be able to perform biopsies and take photographs to help make the diagnosis.

### What complications can happen?

- Allergic reaction
- Breathing difficulties or heart irregularities
- Infection
- Making a hole in your colon
- Bleeding
- Incomplete procedure

### How soon will I recover?

If you were given a sedative, you will usually recover in about an hour. You may feel a bit bloated for a few hours but this will pass. The healthcare team will tell you what was found during the flexible sigmoidoscopy and discuss with you any treatment or follow-up you need. You should be able to return to work the next day unless you are told otherwise.

### Summary

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is usually a safe and effective way of finding out if there is a problem with the lower part of your large bowel.

### Acknowledgements

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