

The test itself:

You will be escorted to the procedure room and introduced to the nurse and doctor who will be with you throughout your Sigmoidoscopy.

The doctor will again check that you have a full understanding of your test and that you are willing to go ahead.

You will be asked to lie on your left side with your knees slightly bent. A light sedation and pain relief is given through an injection in your arm.

In order to monitor your heart rate and breathing, the nurse looking after you will place a probe onto one of your fingers. You will be given oxygen throughout the procedure. A nurse will be with you at all times, giving guidance/support.

The flexible tube will then be inserted gently into your back passage and round your large bowel. Air will be passed through the flexible tube to open up your colon, to give a clear view of the lining, this may give you some wind-like discomfort, but will not last long.

This test will take about 15-45 minutes to complete. After the test you will be moved to the recovery area where you will rest.

What are the possible complications? There are two potential complications with Sigmoidoscopy:

1. Perforation

This is where a tear occurs in the large bowel as a result of the procedure. This is rare and occurs in about 1 in 1500 – 2000 cases. The tear may be obvious immediately or sometimes may be diagnosed later if a patient has persisting abdominal pain after the procedure.

The risk of a perforation is increased when removing a polyp or in patients with diverticulosis and colitis.

2. Haemorrhage (Bleeding)

Excessive bleeding can rarely occur after removing a polyp from the bowel. You may require a repeat Colonoscopy to try and stop the bleeding and in rare cases an operation may be required to stop the bleeding.

Is there an alternative to Sigmoidoscopy?

Yes. An x-ray called a Barium Enema or virtual Sigmoidoscopy can be performed instead. The views of the bowel are not as good and it may miss small polyps or colitis which would be seen at Sigmoidoscopy. Also an x-ray will not allow you to remove any polyps present.

When will I find out the results of the test?

The doctor or nurse will speak to you before you leave the Endoscopy Unit and explain what was seen and done during your test and any follow up treatment required. A copy of the Endoscopy report will be sent to your G.P. If a biopsy (a small piece of tissue) is taken the results may take several days. You will be given a list of discharge instructions by the nurse. Please read and follow them carefully.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Endoscopy Unit if you have any difficulties or queries.

Telephone: 094 90 21733 Ext 2643/2644

**Opening Hours
8.00 am – 5.30 pm.**

*Review Date
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Grúpa Ollscoile Cúram Sláinte
University Health Care Group

Information Leaflet: Sigmoidoscopy/ Left Colonoscopy

Mayo University Hospital
Tel: 094 90 21733



Please bring your Medical Card / Health Insurance details with you to hospital.

Introduction

As your doctor has referred you to have a Sigmoidoscopy in the Endoscopy Unit, Mayo General Hospital, we are making this booklet available to you to help you plan for and understand the procedure and what is involved. Please read this booklet carefully and follow the preparation instructions.

How do I get to the Endoscopy Unit?

The Endoscopy Unit is located in the Day Services Unit on the Ground Floor. As you enter the main door of the hospital, go past the coffee shop on your right and along the corridor, the Day Services Unit will be on your right. **On arrival at the Endoscopy Unit proceed immediately to Reception to register.** The Receptionist will then inform the nursing staff of your arrival.

What to bring

- Appointment Letter
- Details of medical card or medical insurance
- List of your current medications
- Contact number of your escort home

What to wear

There are no special requirements for your procedure. The general rule is to wear something comfortable and loose as this is more comfortable to you after the test. No nail polish is to be worn.

You will be given a gown to change into and a denture pot if necessary. A locker is provided for your clothing. The nurse will take care of them but will not be responsible for any valuables/jewellery so please leave them at home.

How long will I be in hospital?

We aim to see you as soon as possible. Your appointment time is your arrival time to the unit and not necessarily the time of your test. This may happen some time later.

Please remember there will be other patients in the unit who may arrive after you but are taken in for their test before you. This is for medical reasons or maybe for a different procedure to yours.

You will stay in hospital a minimum of 2-3 hours. You need to be medically stable before you are allowed home.

Escorting Home

Please make arrangements to have an escort available to collect you after your procedure and to take you home. Please arrange for your escort to meet with you in the Endoscopy Unit as you are not permitted to leave the unit unaccompanied. You will also need an adult to stay with you overnight at home.

It is important for the remainder of the day that you do not:-

- Drive
- Operate any machinery
- Consume alcoholic beverages
- Sign important documents
- Supervise children on your own

What to do if you want to change or cancel your appointment?

We understand that circumstances can arise that may make it necessary to rearrange or cancel your appointment. Should this be necessary, please contact the secretary who arranged your appointment. You will find the name and telephone number on your appointment letter. Please do this as soon as possible.

What is a Sigmoidoscopy/left Colonoscopy?

This is a test that allows the doctor undertaking the examination to look at the left side of the large bowel. This is done by passing a flexible tube (Sigmoidoscope) through your back passage and gently passing it around the large bowel.

A light sedation may be given through an injection in your arm. It makes you sleepy and relaxed and it will take away most of the awareness of the procedure.

The Sigmoidoscope is connected to a television system and has a mini camera built into the end. Pictures are then seen on the television monitor. By examining your bowel the cause of your symptoms may be found. The test usually takes between 15 and 45 minutes.

Sometimes the doctor takes a biopsy – a sample of the lining of the bowel for examination in the laboratory. A small piece of tissue is removed painlessly through the Sigmoidoscope, using tiny forceps.

It is also possible to remove polyps during the Sigmoidoscopy. Polyps are abnormal projections of tissue, rather like warts, which the doctor will want to examine further.

How do I prepare for the test?

If you are taking iron tablets (e.g. Ferrous Sulphate) please stop taking them 7 days before your Sigmoidoscopy. Please do not eat or drink after 12 midnight the night before your procedure.

As you are having a Sigmoidoscopy there is no need to take bowel preparation. You may be given an enema before your procedure in the Endoscopy Unit by your admitting nurse.

If any of the following apply to you, please contact the Endoscopy Unit or your GP before your appointment who arranged your appointment without delay:-

- You are an insulin controlled diabetic
- You are a diet or tablet controlled diabetic
- You are taking Plavix or Warfarin

What happens when I arrive?

On arrival, please report to reception where the receptionist will check your personal details.

You will be greeted by a nurse and escorted to the assessment area. Here you will be asked a number of questions about your medical history and have your pulse taken.

The nurse will explain the procedure to you. If you have any worries or questions, do not be afraid to ask. The staff will want you as relaxed as possible for you test.

Signing the Consent Form

Before the procedure, the doctor will explain the test to you and will ask you to sign a consent form.

This is to ensure that you understand the test, and its implications.

If you have any queries or worries do not hesitate to ask.