

# Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

## What Is A Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is a commonly performed procedure to examine the lower part of your bowel. This endoscopic test allows your consultant to look directly at the lining of the bowel, helping to diagnose a range of conditions, including:

- **Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)**
- **Colonic polyps**
- **Bowel cancer**

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is often recommended if you experience unexplained changes in bowel habits, such as constipation, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, or weight loss. Biopsies can be taken during the procedure, and polyps can be removed if necessary.

## Do You Need Any Preparation Beforehand?

You will receive written instructions before your procedure. If sedation or anaesthesia is required, you will be given specific instructions on when to stop eating and drinking. It is essential to follow these guidelines carefully.

In most cases, you will need to use an enema to clear the lower part of your bowel about 60 minutes before the procedure. This ensures the consultant has a clear view of your bowel lining.

## What Happens During A Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

- The consultant will use a flexible sigmoidoscope, a thin, flexible tube with a light and camera at the end, which is gently passed through the anus into the rectum and lower colon
- The sigmoidoscope transmits detailed images of your bowel lining to a screen, allowing the consultant to check for abnormalities
- If necessary, polyps can be removed, and tissue samples (biopsies) can be taken from normal and abnormal-looking areas for further analysis
- If you are awake, you can watch the procedure on the screen if you wish
- The consultant may ask you to change positions periodically to improve visibility

- The procedure typically takes around 20 minutes

## Is Flexible Sigmoidoscopy Safe?

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a safe and commonly performed procedure, but as with any medical test, there are some small risks:

- **Bowel perforation (tear)** – Extremely rare but may require surgical treatment
- **Bleeding** – If polyps are removed or biopsies are taken, mild bleeding can occur, which usually resolves on its own or with additional treatment
- **Sedation risks** – If sedation is given, temporary effects on breathing, blood pressure, or heart rate may occur but are usually mild and quickly treated
- **Incomplete procedure** – In some cases, it may not be possible to fully examine the lower bowel, and a repeat sigmoidoscopy may be needed

If you experience severe pain, persistent bleeding, or feel unwell after the procedure, contact the hospital, or your consultant immediately.

## What Happens After A Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

- The procedure takes about 20 minutes to complete
- You may experience mild bloating or wind-like pains, which usually settle quickly
- If you had sedation or anaesthesia, you will need time to fully recover before going home (please refer to our advice sheet for more information)
- Your consultant will discuss the initial results with you immediately after the procedure
- If biopsies were taken, results will be available within a few days

## Why Choose The Midlands Bowel Clinic?

- Expert colorectal specialists with extensive experience in flexible sigmoidoscopy
- State-of-the-art facilities for detailed and accurate diagnosis

- Minimally invasive procedures ensuring quick recovery
- Personalised treatment plans tailored to your individual needs

## Contact Us

If you are experiencing rectal bleeding, abdominal pain, or changes in bowel habits, book a flexible sigmoidoscopy today for early diagnosis and peace of mind.