

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

If you have belly pain, notice changes when going to the bathroom, or are losing weight, your doctor may recommend a test called a flexible sigmoidoscopy.

Flexible sigmoidoscopy examines the lower part of your colon, called the sigmoid colon, the last part that is connected to the rectum.

The lining of the colon can sometimes have problems. It may have ulcers, or sores that bleed, areas that are inflamed or small growths called polyps.

All of these can cause symptoms such as pain or diarrhea, or may be signs of cancer. It is important to have any polyps removed because they can turn into colon cancer.

If you have polyps in your sigmoid colon, you may need to have a colonoscopy to look at your entire colon.

Before having a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy, you'll need to clean out your colon and rectum.

Your doctor will let you know how to prepare.

You may need to stop taking your medicines before your procedure. Follow your doctor's directions for preparation.

You may need to be on a clear liquid diet the day before.

You may also need to take a laxative or enema the night before. You'll want to be near a bathroom during this time.

A sigmoidoscopy takes about 10 to 20 minutes. You'll be awake during the test.

If you have concerns, ask your doctor for medicine to put you to sleep or to help relieve discomfort before the test.

You might get an intravenous line or "IV," which is a thin tube that is placed in a vein. The IV is used to give you fluids and medicines.

During your test, your doctor uses a special long flexible tube with a light and camera at the end called a sigmoidoscope.

The tip of the scope is placed into the anus and video images from the camera are sent to a monitor.

Air is used to create space in the rectum as the scope is guided in.

If you're awake during the procedure, you may feel some cramping or have a feeling like you need to use the bathroom.

A sample of tissue, called a biopsy, may also be taken and sent to a lab for testing.

If you had medicine to put you to sleep, you will need to rest a while after the test.

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You will also need someone to drive you home.

It is normal to have a lot of gas after your test.

The results of your tests will be ready in a week or two.

Your doctor will talk with you about the results and any other treatment you may need.