

## Having a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy with Phosphate Enema

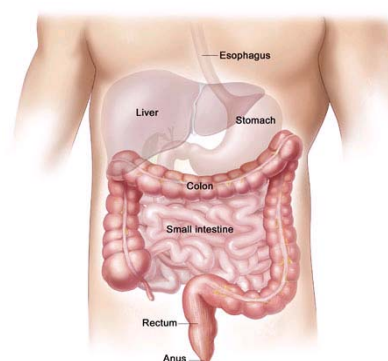
**If you need an interpreter, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can arrange for a qualified person to attend your appointments.**

**Your appointment has been arranged at:**

- Lady Sobell Gastrointestinal Unit, Wexham Park Hospital, Slough ☎ 01753 634150**
- Heatherwood Endoscopy Unit, Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot ☎ 01344 877801**

### What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is an investigation using a flexible telescopic tube to look at the lining of the lower part of the large bowel (colon). A tube, called a sigmoidoscope, is inserted at the anus and manoeuvred around to about half way along the transverse colon. The whole of the large colon is about 1.5 metres long. The bowel will be prepared for the procedure by giving you an enema shortly after you arrive for the procedure. This will make you have bowel motions. You will then proceed to have the camera examination.



### Why do I need a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Your symptoms suggest that you may have a problem with the large bowel (the colon) which requires investigation. Likewise, if you suffer from inflammatory bowel disease or have a family history of colorectal (bowel) cancer, you may need to be monitored.

### What are the benefits of having a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

If there is any abnormality in the bowel then it should be possible to see it during the procedure which is relatively quick (about ¼ hour). It allows the doctor to take samples (biopsies) of tissue so they can be examined under a microscope. The lining of the bowel is insensitive to pain so you should not feel anything when the samples are removed.

### Is there an alternative to having a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

There is an alternative called CT colonography. This is a less invasive test which uses special x-ray equipment and computers to obtain an interior view of the colon. However, it is a strictly diagnostic procedure, that still requires bowel prep to be taken but which does not allow tissue to be sampled.

### Are there any risks involved?

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is a skilled procedure and is performed by a specially trained clinician who takes every care to reduce any risks.

During the procedure you may experience some discomfort, which is caused by the gas used to assist with the transit of the sigmoidoscope around the colon. This will probably leave you feeling bloated until you pass the excess 'wind' naturally.

- It is possible to perforate (tear) part of the bowel (approximately 1:1000) and the risk is increased if a polyp is removed.

- It is also possible that you will experience bleeding following the procedure. The risk of this is 1 in 100 if you have a polyp removed. A blood transfusion or surgery may then be required.

### Will I need sedation?

No sedation will be offered for this procedure as it only takes a short time. If preferred, you may have gas and air (Entonox).

Entonox is a very quick acting painkiller which you inhale (breathe in). It will make you feel relaxed and sleepy whilst relieving your pain. The effect of Entonox wears off very rapidly allowing you to fully function within a short time, although the effects of the procedure itself may prevent you being active. You **should not drive** or operate any machinery for at least **30 minutes** after Entonox and not until you feel it is safe to do so.

### Will I have to stay in hospital?

You will usually have the sigmoidoscopy as a day patient, involving a stay of 2 - 3 hours.

### Will I get the results straight away?

When you have recovered, a healthcare professional will explain the results. If a biopsy has been taken or a polyp removed, you will be told when and where you can get the results.

### Are there any after effects?

After effects are rare, but you may notice some bleeding if a biopsy has been taken or a polyp removed. You may experience a little abdominal pain within the first 24 hours after the flexible sigmoidoscopy.

### What preparation do I need for the examination?

- If you normally take any **iron** tablets, stop taking them **7 days before your procedure**.
- If you are taking any regular medication for stomach, bowel, heart, lung, kidney or other medical conditions, please continue these as normal, you may take your medications with a glass of water on the day of your examination. Warfarin, Pradaxa (dabigatran), clopidogrel, rivaroxaban and aspirin can be continued in your usual dosage.
- If you take Warfarin, please have your INR checked 7 days before your procedure and bring your INR results with you to the appointment. Your INR will be checked again on the day of the procedure by our nursing team.
- If you have had a heart attack or acute heart failure or a coronary stent inserted recently, it is advisable to wait until your condition has stabilised before having your flexible sigmoidoscopy, usually 3 months. Check with us by telephoning 01753 634152/634163. Please also check with your cardiologist.
- If you are asthmatic, please bring your inhalers with you.
- If you are taking any regular medication for diabetes, please telephone 01753 634157 for a separate leaflet that will explain how to control your blood sugar around the time of your procedure and bring your diabetic pills or insulin with you. It is important to maintain a blood sugar above 5 mmol/l leading up to your procedure. Check your blood sugar level and if necessary suck some glucose tablets ahead of your procedure to achieve this.

## What preparation do I need for the examination (continued)?

- If you have a colostomy (external stool bag on a stoma from previous bowel surgery), the bowel preparation medicine will work in the same way. You are advised to put on a drainable appliance before taking the medicine until after the examination. If you do not have any drainable appliances (pouches), please contact your stoma care nurse at Wexham Park Hospital on 01753 633734 or bleep via the hospital switchboard on 01753 633000.
- Please let us know by telephoning 01753 634152/634153 if you are pregnant or trying to conceive.

## General Information

Please bring a dressing gown, slippers and something to read. Do not bring valuable items such as credit cards and jewellery.

## On the day or your examination

Stop eating 4 hours before your appointment time, but continue to have light drinks (water, squash, black tea), stopping 2 hours before your appointment time. Prior to that you may eat and drink normally and there is no need to change your diet beforehand.

## On arrival at the unit

The receptionist will ask for your questionnaire. A healthcare professional will then complete a form about your medical history and take your blood pressure. A nurse will give you an enema.

## Informed Consent

Prior to the procedure, you will be required to sign a consent form. Before signing it, the healthcare professional will discuss with you what the procedure is likely to involve, the intended benefits, alternative investigations, significant, unavoidable or frequently occurring risks and any extra procedures which may become necessary. All of the information which will be discussed with you is included in this leaflet.

## The examination

A nurse will stay with you throughout the examination. You will be asked to lie on your left side with your knees slightly bent. (This does not apply to patients with a stoma.) The examination is usually completed within 15 minutes.

## After the examination

You must rest in the unit for up to an hour afterwards. You may feel a little bloated with wind pains but these usually disappear quickly. You may resume eating as normal.

If you have had inhaled pain relief, you must not drive for at least 30 minutes.

For a translation of this leaflet or for accessing this information in another format:

**Large  
Print**



Easy to Read



Translation



Audio



Braille

Please contact (PALS) the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on:

**Frimley Park Hospital**

**Telephone:** 01276 526530

**Email:** fhft.palsfrimleypark@nhs.net

**Heatherwood Hospital**

**Telephone:** 01753 633365

**Email:** fhft.palsheatherwood@nhs.net

**Wexham Park Hospital**

**Telephone:** 01753 633365

**Email:** fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

<p><b>Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust Frimley Park Hospital</b> Portsmouth Road Frimley Surrey GU16 7UJ</p> <p><b>Hospital switchboard:</b> 01276 604604 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.fhft.nhs.uk">www.fhft.nhs.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust Heatherwood Hospital</b> London Road Ascot SL5 8AA</p> <p><b>Hospital switchboard:</b> 01344 623333 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.fhft.nhs.uk">www.fhft.nhs.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust Wexham Park Hospital</b> Wexham Slough Berkshire SL2 4HL</p> <p><b>Hospital switchboard:</b> 01753 633000 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.fhft.nhs.uk">www.fhft.nhs.uk</a></p>
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#### Legal Notice

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible. Please therefore always check specific advice or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

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