

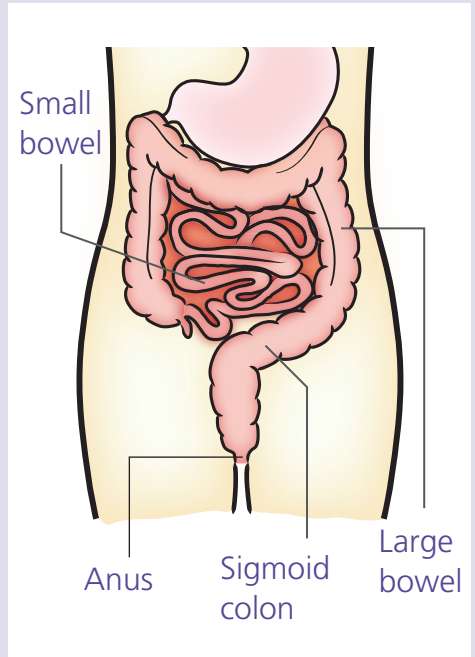
Sigmoidoscopy

Endoscopy Unit patient information booklet



What is a sigmoidoscopy?

A sigmoidoscopy is a camera procedure used to examine the lining of the last part of the large bowel, including the rectum. It is carried out by passing a thin, flexible tube, with a bright light and tiny camera at the end (an endoscope), through the anus (back passage) and into the bowel. The procedure usually takes 10-15 minutes.



What are the benefits of having a sigmoidoscopy?

Having a sigmoidoscopy will help us to discover the cause of your symptoms such as change in bowel habit or bleeding. It is also used to monitor other conditions such as colitis (inflammation of the bowel). It allows us to prescribe any treatments or carry out further procedures that may be required. A sigmoidoscopy also allows us to take biopsies or sometimes to remove polyps.

Who will perform the sigmoidoscopy and where will it be done?

An endoscopist- either a doctor, nurse or appropriately trained health care professional will carry out the procedure. Other health care professionals ie doctors, nurses or medical students wishing to learn more about a sigmoidoscopy and digestive diseases may be present or assisting in the procedure room. Please tell your nurse if you object to them being present. This will not affect your treatment in any way.

This procedure will be performed at the Endoscopy Unit at the Bradford Royal Infirmary.

Is a sigmoidoscopy painful?

You may experience some discomfort, bloating or abdominal cramps. This is due to the air that is introduced into the bowel during the procedure which enables the endoscopist to view the lining of the bowel, and should disappear quickly as you pass wind.

How do I prepare for a sigmoidoscopy?

To help us get good views of the lower bowel, it is important that it is completely empty. Therefore you are usually given an enema just before the procedure. An enema is a liquid solution that is placed into your lower bowel through your anal canal (backpassage) which will cause you to have a bowel movement. The nurse will ask you to try and keep the enema inside you for a few minutes before going to the toilet. Having an enema is usually painless.

You may be provided with the enema and asked to give it to yourself at home before leaving for your appointment. If this is the case we will give you full instructions on how to do this. If you do not feel able to do this yourself, please bring the enema with you and we will help you on the Endoscopy Unit.

You can eat and drink normally and take your usual medication until you give yourself or are given the enema. If you are taking iron tablets, please stop taking them 1 week before your procedure. (This is because iron tablets make your motions go black, making it more difficult for the endoscopist to see the lining of the bowel.)

Nail varnish (and artificial nails) should be removed from fingers and toes to allow us to use equipment that measures the oxygen in your blood and your pulse rate during the procedure.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

- A list of the medication you are currently taking.
- Any medication you may need whilst you are with us eg inhalers
- You are welcome to wear your own clothes for the procedure, but if you prefer to wear a hospital gown for your procedure and you have a dressing gown and slippers, please bring them with you.
- You may also want to bring something to read whilst you wait.
- Please do not bring any valuables into hospital with you.

What happens when I arrive at the Endoscopy Unit?

On arrival at the Endoscopy Unit, you will be met at reception and then a nurse will ask you some questions and explain the procedure:

Important please tell the nurse or doctor if you:-

- Have had any allergies or bad reactions to drugs or other procedures.
- Have any medical conditions such as chest or heart conditions, epilepsy, diabetes etc.
- Are suffering from an acute illness eg cough, cold, sore throat.
- Are fitted with a pacemaker.

When you are in hospital it is essential to wear a wristband at all times to make sure you are safe during your stay. The wristband will show accurate details about you on it including all the information that staff need to identify you correctly and give you the right care.

If you do not have a wristband whilst in hospital, then please ask a member of staff for one. If it comes off or is uncomfortable, ask a member of staff to replace it.

You will be asked to sign a consent form, this means that you are satisfied with the information you have been given, you understand what the procedure involves, the benefits, risks and alternatives and that you agree to the procedure. If you have any worries or queries at this stage, please ask: we want you to be as relaxed as possible for the procedure and will be happy to answer any questions.

You are welcome to wear your own clothes for the procedure, but if you prefer you may undress and put on a gown and paper underwear, which we will provide. You are welcome to wear your own dressing gown and slippers at this time. You will then be given the enema to prepare you for the sigmoidoscopy, if you have not already given it to yourself at home.

Expect to be on the Endoscopy Unit for up to 4 hours to allow time for your admission, consent, the procedure itself and recovery afterwards.

What happens during the procedure?

During the procedure you will be resting comfortably on a trolley on your left side in the procedure room. The endoscopist will begin by gently examining the anus (back passage) with a lubricated gloved finger. The endoscope is then passed gently through the anus (back passage) into your bowel. Air will be passed through it to get a clear view, which can give you some wind-like discomfort, but it will not last long.

The endoscopist will look round your lower bowel. Small samples (biopsies) may be taken from the lining of the bowel for analysis. This is painless. Photographs or video may be taken through the endoscope as part of the record of the procedure. These photographs or video may be used for teaching purposes, but if so your details will be removed. The procedure usually takes about 10 to 15 minutes but occasionally may take a little longer.

Some people may find this procedure undignified, the staff on the Endoscopy Unit will do everything possible to maintain your privacy and dignity and put you at ease.

Does sigmoidoscopy have any risk or complications?

A sigmoidoscopy is generally a safe procedure.

Complications are very rare, occurring in less than 1 in 500 cases.

Possible complications are:

- Perforation, which is a tear through the wall of the bowel, which may require surgery.
- Bleeding.
- Very rarely, despite our best care, a complication such as perforation or bleeding can be so serious that it is life threatening. However, death due to a sigmoidoscopy is extremely rare and occurs in less than 1 in 3,000 cases.
- As with any procedure, there is always a risk of hospital acquired infections including COVID 19; however, please be reassured that we have a high number of safety measures in place to help reduce any such risks. This includes increased use of personal protective equipment for our staff, effective handwashing and robust infection control procedures.

If you are worried about any complications you can discuss these with the nurse or doctor when you come for the procedure.

Are there any alternatives to a sigmoidoscopy?

Barium enema and CT scan can be performed however, they may not give the same detailed information and do not allow biopsy or removal of polyps. The alternative is to do nothing. You may therefore continue to have symptoms and their cause will remain unknown.

What happens after the sigmoidoscopy?

Once the endoscopist has seen everything they need to, the endoscope will be removed. You will be taken to the recovery area to get changed. You will then be discharged home. We advise you to wear loose clothing for your journey home as your stomach may feel a little bloated.

When do I get my results?

The results of the procedure and any follow up arrangements will be discussed with you before you leave the Endoscopy Unit. You will be given a written summary of your sigmoidoscopy findings to take home with you. Laboratory results from biopsies will not be available on the day, but will be sent to your GP or Specialist. This will take 2 to 3 weeks.

When to seek medical advice

If you develop any of the following symptoms following discharge, you should seek urgent medical advice from the unit you attended, NHS 111, your GP or Emergency Department:

- Severe abdominal pain.
- Passing blood from your anal canal. A small amount of bleeding can occur following removal of polyps or biopsy, if you are worried about the amount of bleeding please contact the Endoscopy Unit for advice.
- High temperature (38°C or more).

Useful telephone numbers

If you have any problems within 48 hours of discharge please ring the ward / department that you attended. If the ward/department is closed please contact Ward 5 at Bradford Royal Infirmary (BRI).

- Endoscopy Unit BRI – **01274 276393** (Mon to Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm)
- Ward 5 BRI – **01274 364413** (24 hours)
- If you are presently an inpatient on one of the wards at Bradford Royal Infirmary or St Luke's Hospital and you have further questions about the proposed procedure please ask the ward staff to ring the Endoscopy Unit and they will make arrangements for a member of staff to speak to you
- Appointment enquiries – **01274 273073** (Mon to Fri 8am to 4.00pm)

By Textphone

You can contact us using the Relay UK app. To contact us ring **18001 01274 273073** (Appointment enquiries).

Interpreters

If you require an interpreter please arrange for someone to contact **Appointment enquiries on 01274 273073**. We use professional interpreters rather than family and friends.

Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

Frequently Asked Questions?

- 1 Will it hurt? *See page 2*
2. How long will it take? *See page 5*, however you will stay in the hospital most of the day for checks afterwards
3. When do I get my results? *See page 7*
4. Do I need somebody with me afterwards? No, as you have not had any medication that will effect you afterwards.

This information has been developed using comments and feedback from patients who have previously had this procedure.



55

If you require a version of this booklet in large print please ring Appointment enquiries on 01274 273073 and arrangements will be made to send you one.

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