

## Having a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

Gemini Endoscopy Suite  
Tel: 01271 349180

Patients name: .....

Hospital No: .....

Your appointment is at ..... on .....

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

This leaflet will answer many of your questions about your flexible sigmoidoscopy. However, if you would like to speak to someone, please contact either the Gemini Endoscopy Suite or the colorectal nurse specialist. The telephone numbers are at the end of this leaflet.

### Why is it needed?

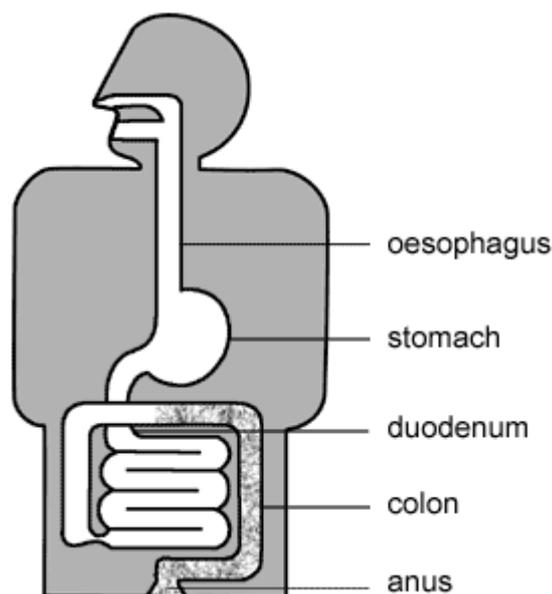
This test allows the doctor to look directly at the lining of the bowel. This means we can check whether any disease is present and will help us to find the cause of your bowel symptoms.

### What does it involve?

This is a simple examination, which enables the doctor to view the inside of your large bowel. A tiny camera on a flexible tube will be carefully passed through the rectum (back passage) and into the large bowel.

Sometimes a small amount of tissue (biopsy) may need to be taken from a particular area for further examination in the laboratory. The tissue is painlessly removed using tiny forceps passed through the sigmoidoscope.

Having a flexible sigmoidoscopy is not painful, although some people may find it uncomfortable.



Entonox gas (gas and air) **may** be given if needed.

When you come to the department, a nurse will discuss the test with you. This is to ensure that you understand what the test involves. If you have any questions or worries, don't be afraid to ask.

## How to find us

The Gemini Endoscopy Suite is located on Level 0 at the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

If you come in through the main hospital entrance, use the lifts or stairs to go down to Level 0. On leaving the lift turn right and head for the link corridor. The corridor forms a 'crossroad' – take the right turn and follow the corridor up to a double set of doors, through the doors and the Gemini Endoscopy Suite is on your left.

If you come in from the Endoscopy Drop-off Zone, you will need to walk between the building and the small grey building to find a blue door on your right. Go through the blue door and the entrance to the Gemini Endoscopy suite is directly opposite.

## Special precautions

- If you are taking any of the following medications, please contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite when you receive your appointment. (If you are preparing for the procedure at home, please contact the Suite before you come into the hospital)
  - **Warfarin**
  - **Rivaroxaban**
  - **Dabigatran**
  - **Edoxaban**
  - **Apixaban**
  - **Clopidogrel**
  - **Prasugrel**
  - **Ticagrelor**
- If you are diabetic on medication (insulin or tablets) and need advice, please contact the Diabetic Liaison Nurse on 01271 322726.
- If you are on **iron (ferrous sulphate)** tablets, please stop taking them one week before your appointment.
- If you have any allergies or have had a bad reaction to drugs or other tests, please tell the nurse on admission and/or doctor.

## On the day of your test

- Have **nothing to eat** and **no milky drinks** for **six hours before** your appointment time.
- You can have clear fluids such as water or squash up until two hours before your procedure. For those two hours it is necessary to remain **nil by mouth** until after your procedure.
- You may continue taking your usual medication.

For the sigmoidoscopy to be carried out successfully, your rectum (back passage) and large bowel must be clear of any waste material. This is achieved by the use of an enema.

Your doctor may request a different type of bowel prep, if this is the case, you will have a pre assessment and bowel prep instructions will be sent out with the bowel prep.

Therefore:

- If you are preparing **at home**, you will need to insert the enclosed enema into your rectum (back passage) **2 hours before you leave to come to the suite** for your appointment. You may find it easier to ask a relative for assistance. Be sure to stay close to your toilet after insertion. The enema should work within 30 minutes. You may have a second movement then your bowels should settle in time to travel to the hospital. If you feel you are unable to insert the enema, please contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite for advice.
- If you are preparing **at hospital**, the nurse will need to give you an enema before the procedure on admission to the Gemini Endoscopy Suite.

## What to bring

Please bring:

- Phone numbers for your Next of kin and the person collecting you (if different)
- Consent form
- A dressing gown and slippers
- A list of or any tablets or medicines that you are taking, including supplements and herbal remedies
- Your reading glasses

Please wear minimal jewellery, make-up or nail varnish for this appointment.

Do not bring any valuables with you as we cannot take responsibility for any losses.

## What will happen during the test?

You will be asked to lie on your left side on the trolley and made as comfortable as possible. A probe will be placed on your finger. This is just to monitor your pulse during the procedure and is routine.

You can use the Entonox gas (gas and air) to relieve any discomfort during the procedure.

The doctor will then pass the sigmoidoscope gently into your rectum (back passage) and then into your large bowel. The image will be transmitted onto a television monitor, which you may or may not wish to watch. The examination usually takes about 10-20 minutes; when finished, the sigmoidoscope is removed easily, causing little discomfort.

## What should I expect after the test?

After the examination you will be taken to the recovery area, where you will be able to rest and relax. You will feel the need to pass a lot of excessive 'wind' from your bowels. This may last for about 12 hours and is quite normal after this procedure. If you have had a biopsy (small sample of tissue) taken, you may notice a small amount of blood from your anus (back passage) either on the toilet paper or in the toilet pan.

## What are the possible complications?

This is a safe procedure. However, there are some small risks.

**Perforation:** It is possible to damage the bowel by making a small hole or tear, called a perforation. The risk of this happening is approximately 1 in 1000 tests. This will usually result in admission to hospital and in some cases an operation to repair the hole.

**Bleeding:** It is not uncommon to have a small amount of blood loss after biopsies or polyp removal, which normally settles within 24 hours. If the blood loss persists or is excessive you may be admitted to hospital for observation and in some cases an operation and /or blood transfusion. The risk of this happening is approximately 1 in 1000. Bleeding can occur up to 10 days after the procedure.

**Missed Pathology:** A colonoscopy is the best test to examine the large bowel, but we can miss abnormalities, sometimes even important ones. We take great care to minimise this risk as far as humanly possible.

You will be closely monitored throughout and if there is any cause for concern, the test will be stopped immediately.

## When will I be able to go home?

You will be able to go home **within 2 to 3 hours** of your appointment time. Please **do not** use public transport.

If you have had the Entonox gas (gas and air), you **must not** drive for half an hour after your procedure.

Once home, it is important to rest quietly for the rest of the day.

You may eat and drink normally once at home.

## Test results

The results of your test will be given to you and explained before you go home and a copy of the report will be sent to your GP.

## Further information

**If you are not able to attend for your appointment please contact the booking team as soon as possible, as we can offer your appointment to another patient.**

Doctors and nurses training in Endoscopy at many different levels attend unit or department and will be involved in your care under the direct supervision of experienced consultants and nurses. If you do not wish to be involved in training these experts of the future please contact the Booking Office.

If you have any queries or concerns about your sigmoidoscopy, please do not hesitate to contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite. You can access the Endoscopy Unit webpage on the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust website at [www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk). Go to 'Our services' then 'Endoscopy'. Click on 'Endoscopy FAQ' for more information.

## Useful telephone numbers

- Gemini Endoscopy Suite      01271 349180
- Mrs Cross' secretary      01271 370285
- Mr Cartmell's secretary      01271 370241
- Ms Beaton's secretary      01271 370241
- Dr Moran's secretary      01271 322734
- Dr Davis's secretary      01271 322447
- Colorectal nurse specialist      01271 322464

### PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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