

You have been scheduled for a flexible sigmoidoscopy at UNC Health Care.

What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

The purpose of a flexible sigmoidoscopy is to look inside the sigmoid colon and rectum. The doctor will pass a flexible tube that has a small camera and headlight to see the inside of your colon on a TV monitor. The doctor can take biopsies of any abnormal areas, and can also remove polyps. Sometimes this test is done with sedative medications.

How to prepare for a flexible sigmoidoscopy?

One week before the flexible sigmoidoscopy:

- You should stop taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (e.g., ibuprofen) and Aspirin *unless* these medicines have been prescribed by a doctor.
- If you take Plavix (Clopidigrel), Coumadin (Warfarin), or other blood thinning/anticoagulation medicines then you should discuss what to do with your doctor.

One day before the flexible sigmoidoscopy:

- If you have diabetes we recommend you take only one-half the dose of long acting insulin (e.g., Lantus) the night before the endoscopy.
- Go to a pharmacy and purchase two Fleet enemas.

The day of the flexible sigmoidoscopy:

- *What to eat:* you cannot eat any food, suck candy, or chew gum until after the sigmoidoscopy is over.
- *What to drink:* You may drink water, black coffee (without sugar, milk or cream), apple juice, soda pop, or club soda. Stop drinking these liquids at least 3 hours before the sigmoidoscopy.
- *Medications:* do NOT take any medication for diabetes, diuretics (such as lasix/furosemide), or blood pressure medicine that ends in “-pril” or “-artan”. You may take your other medications with a small amount of liquid up to four hours before the sigmoidoscopy.
- *Preparation:* For the doctor to perform the best examination possible, the rectum and sigmoid colon need to be clean. Two hours prior to leaving for the appointment take the first enema following the instructions that come with the enema. In order to obtain the maximum benefit, it is important to hold the enema as long as possible before expelling. After you move your bowels once take the second enema.
- *What to bring:* if possible, please bring your hospital card and a list of your medications.

- If you choose to have the sigmoidoscopy performed without sedative medications you may come alone. If you choose to have the sigmoidoscopy performed with sedative medications then you must be accompanied by an adult who can drive you home after the test. **The exam will not be done unless a person at least 18 years old comes with you and stays in the GI Procedure waiting room during the exam.**
- You should expect to spend up to 4 hours in our procedures unit, longer if you are scheduled to have an additional test done on the same day.

After your sigmoidoscopy:

After the sigmoidoscopy is completed we will observe you in a recovery area for approximately 30 minutes. Before you leave, the doctor will explain the results of the exam, and also give you a report and instructions.

If you received sedative medications then the person who came with you must sign you out and drive you home. You cannot drive or go back to work for at least 12 hours.

If you were not given medication for sedation, you will be able to walk, drive or take a van, bus or taxi after the exam.

If you have any questions or need to reschedule your exam please call 919-966-5563 (if your exam is scheduled for UNC Hospital) or 919-843-7200 (for UNC at Meadowmont).

If you have an urgent question after hours please page the GI fellow on call at 919-966-4131.