

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

What Is a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

A Flexible Sigmoidoscopy is a procedure performed by a gastroenterologist to examine the lower portion of the GI including the rectum and lower portion of the colon called the sigmoid. During the procedure, a thin, flexible tube called a colonoscope is used to transmit high quality pictures of the inside lining of the gastrointestinal tract to a video monitor.

When Would My Child Need a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Your child's gastroenterologist may recommend a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy to further evaluate symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation or rectal bleeding. A Colonoscopy is also used to treat many conditions including removal of polyps and the treatment of bleeding.

How Does My Child Prepare for a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

Your doctor will discuss the Flexible Sigmoidoscopy with you in detail and, prior to the procedure our office staff will give you detailed preparation instructions. Preparation for a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy often include using enemas a day before the procedure to help clean out the colon and make it easier for your doctor to perform the procedure. This is the very important because if the colon is not completely clean, your doctor may not be able to perform a complete exam. If your child is receiving sedation, he/she will be asked to fast the night before the procedure. It is essential that you tell your doctor about any medical problems or allergies to medications that your child has and that you bring a complete list of your child's medications on the day of the procedure.

What Can My Child Expect During a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

For a flexible sigmoidoscopy, babies will often have this procedure done without sedation. The procedure is very short and well tolerated. Older children are often sedated by an anesthesiologist. In this case, your child will not be awake during the procedure and will not remember it. During the procedure, your child's doctor will pass the colonoscope through the rectum into the lower part of the colon. During the procedure air will be introduced to help your doctor see better. The doctor will make every effort to remove the air when the procedure is finished. The procedure usually takes about 10-15 minutes to perform.

What Happens After a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

If your child is sedated, he/she will be monitored for a short period of time while he wakes up. Once all the sedation has worn off, your child will be able to eat (unless your doctor instructs you otherwise). Our staff will give you detailed post-procedure instructions. Immediately after the endoscopy, your doctor will be able to show you pictures taken during the procedure. However, biopsy results can take a few days (and sometimes up to a week) to get back.

What Are the Risks of Having a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy?

The risks of having a **flexible sigmoidoscopy** are rare. Potential risks include: having a reaction to the sedation being used, bleeding, having complications from heart or lung disease, infection and perforation (a tear in the lining of the gastrointestinal tract).