



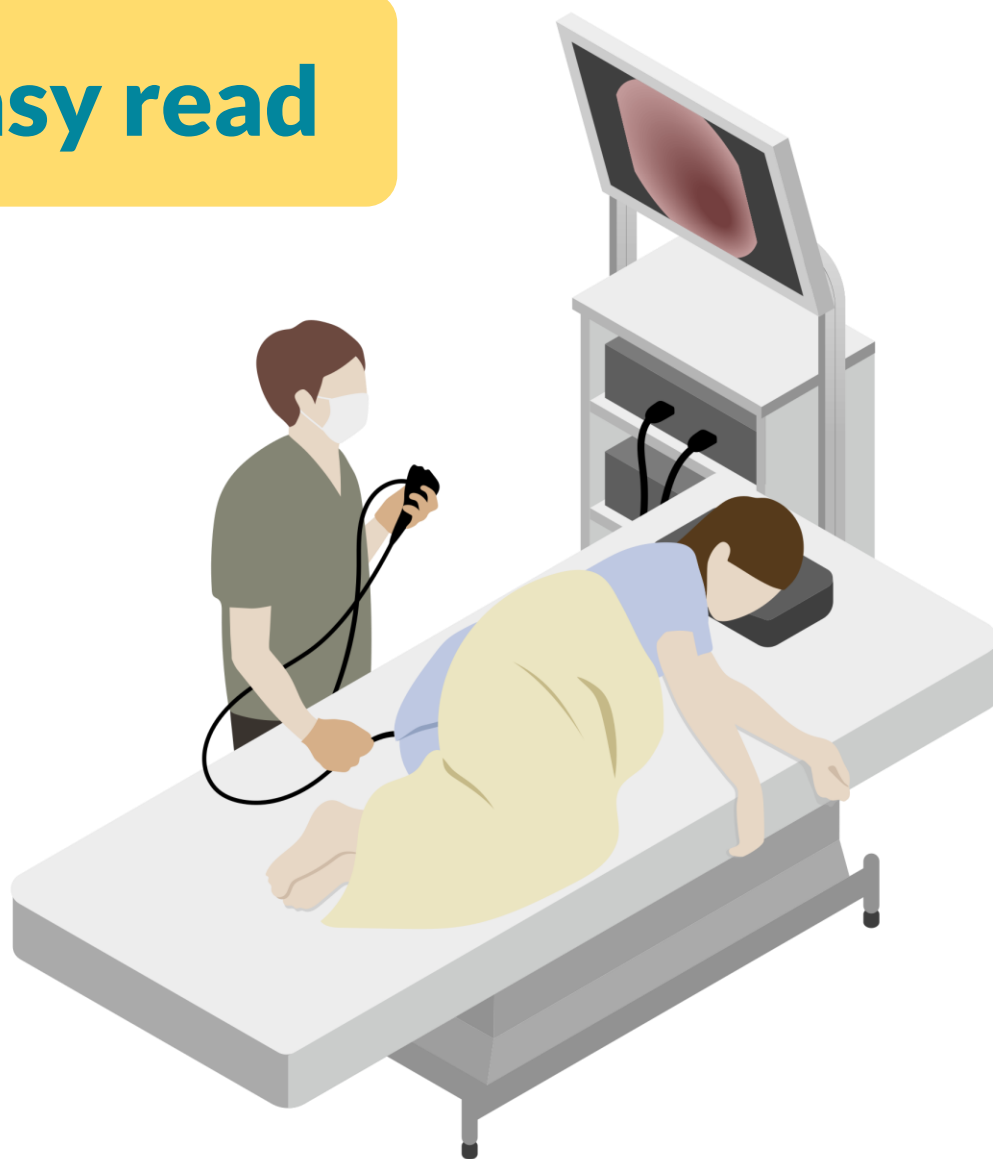
GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Flexible sigmoidoscopy

Information for patients

Easy read





This booklet explains what will happen when you have a **flexible sigmoidoscopy**.

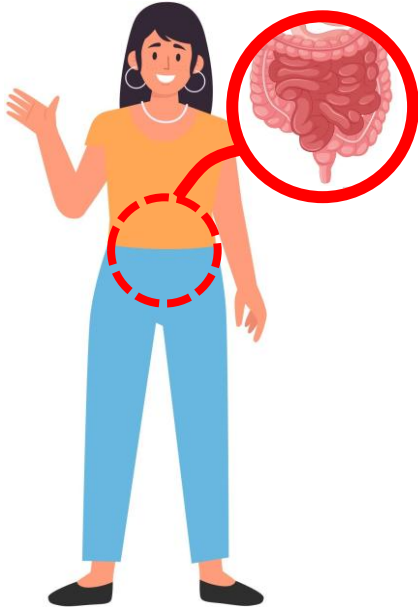


You might want to ask someone to help you read it.



Let someone know if there is anything that you do not understand.

What is a flexible sigmoidoscopy?



A **flexible sigmoidoscopy** is a test that looks into your bottom and around the left side of your bowel.

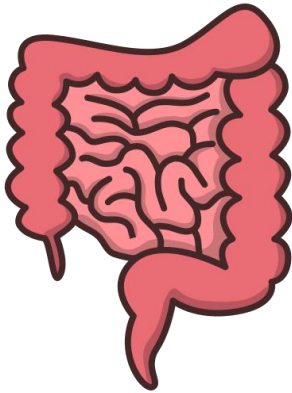


The doctor uses a special camera on the end of a long, bendy tube to check if your bowel is healthy.

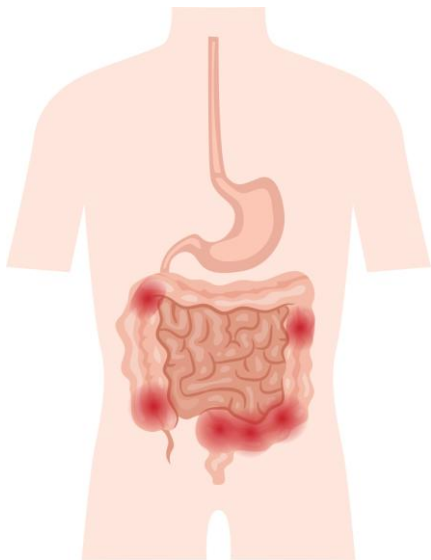


It is done at the hospital. You can usually go home the same day.

What is a bowel?



Your **bowel** is inside your body and is part of your gut.



It is part of your **digestive system**.

It connects your small intestine to your bottom.

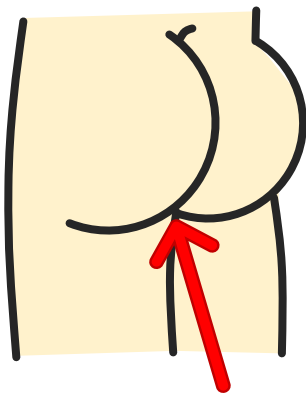


One of its jobs is to remove waste (poo) that your body does not need.

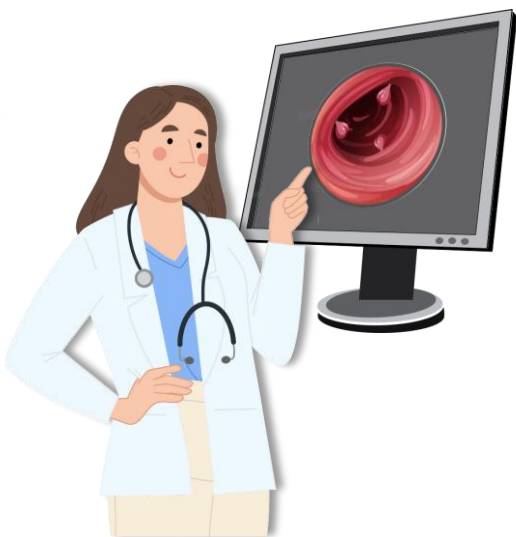
What will happen?



The doctor will use a special little camera on a thin, bendy tube (called an endoscope).



The tube goes in your bottom so the camera can get to your colon.



The camera sends pictures and a video to a monitor.

This helps the doctor to see the inside of your bowel.

Before your flexible sigmoidoscopy



You will have to take some tablets called **laxatives** at home.



Laxatives will make you need to go to the toilet to do a poo.



It will make your poo more runny than it usually is.

This is to clear your bowel so the doctor can see your colon clearly with the camera.

Before your flexible sigmoidoscopy



If you have been given tablets to take at home you may need stop eating certain types of food.

This includes brown rice and brown bread.

Your doctor will give you a list of the foods you cannot eat.

Before your flexible sigmoidoscopy



A few hours before your flexible sigmoidoscopy you will have to have an **enema**.

An **enema** is a small bottle of liquid that you put into your bottom, using a small tube.

You can do this at home before you come to the hospital.



If you cannot complete the enema yourself at home, do not worry.

Bring it along with you to your appointment and a nurse will do this for you.

Having your flexible sigmoidoscopy



A flexible sigmoidoscopy takes about 15 to 20 minutes.



You will change into a hospital gown.

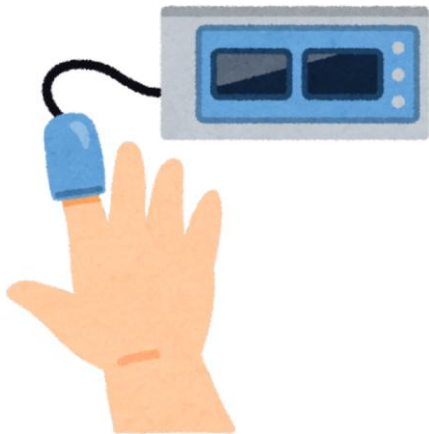


You will need to take off your skirt or trousers and your underwear.

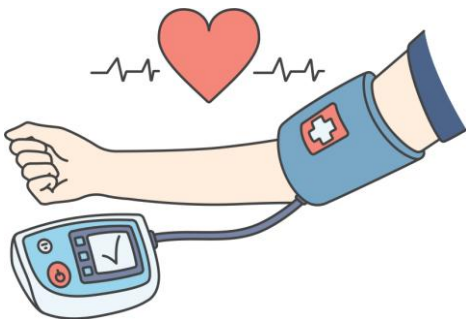
Having your flexible sigmoidoscopy



First you will have some checks. They do not hurt.



The nurse will put a special clip on your finger to check your heartbeat.



The nurse will put a cuff around your arm to check your blood pressure. It feels like a tight hug on your arm.

Having your flexible sigmoidoscopy



You may be given medicine through a tube in the back of your hand to make you feel sleepy and relaxed.

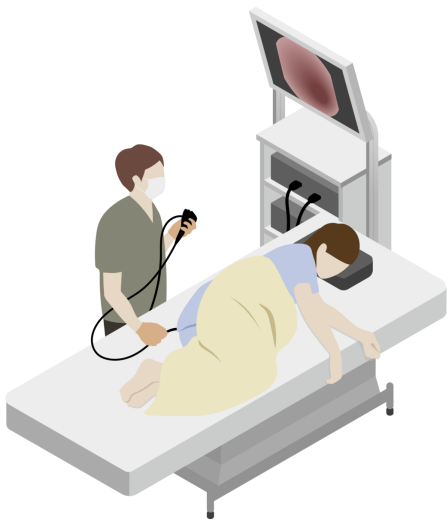


You may have gas and air (called **entonox**). This can help you feel calm and in control.



An anaesthetist (a doctor who gives medicine that makes you feel sleepy) and your medical team will decide which is best for you.

Having your flexible sigmoidoscopy



You will be asked to lay down on a bed on your left side.

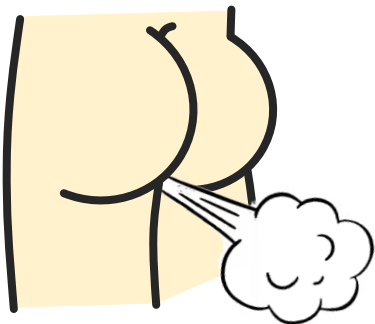
The doctor will slightly move your hospital gown, but no one else in the room will see your bottom.

The doctor will gently place a thin tube in your bottom. You may feel a little uncomfortable but it should not hurt.

Having your flexible sigmoidoscopy



You might feel the camera blowing a bit of air into your bottom. This is to help the doctor to see your bowel better.

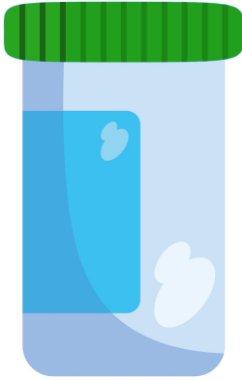


It can make you feel like you need to pass wind (fart). Do not worry if you need to, this is normal.



If you are uncomfortable at any time you can ask the doctor to stop so you can take a break.

Having your flexible sigmoidoscopy



The doctor may take a tiny bit from the lining of your bowel to do some tests.

This is called a **biopsy**.



Small growths called **polyps** may also be removed if the doctor finds these.

It will not hurt when the doctor does this.

What if I feel worried?

You may feel worried about having a flexible sigmoidoscopy. It is normal to feel unsure, especially if you have not had one before.

When we feel worried it can be helpful to think about something else.

Some people like to imagine being in their favourite place.

Some people like to concentrate on taking deep, slow breaths.

You can bring something with you from home that you find comforting like a favourite object, comfy blanket or a picture of something that makes you feel happy.

Things to remember

- The doctor and nurse will make sure you feel comfortable. They are there to help you.
- Talk to your doctor if you are worried or concerned.
- To help you relax try a progressive muscle relaxation exercise or breathing exercise.

Video



Scan this code
with your phone
or tablet.

You can watch a video that explains **what happens during a flexible sigmoidoscopy**.

Click on the link to watch the video: [What it's like to have a flexible sigmoidoscopy](#)

Relaxation exercises



Scan this code with your phone or tablet.

Breathing exercises can help you feel more relaxed.

This video shows you how to use breathing to relax: [1 minute breathe bubble](#)



Scan this code with your phone or tablet.

Relaxing your muscles can help you feel less tense and worried.

This video shows you how to relax your muscles: [Progressive muscle relaxation exercise](#)

If you need help



If you have any questions or need to talk to someone, you can contact the Endoscopy Team.



Our telephone number is:
01633 238706.



Our email address is:

ABB.EndoscopyPreAssessment@wales.nhs.uk

If you send an email, you should include your name and your hospital number.

Colonoscopy image from Wikimedia Commons.

Used with permission under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#) license.
