

If you have any questions please contact your doctor or the GI Lab at 312-926-7614.

Sigmoidoscopy

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is an exam of the rectum and lower third of the large intestine (descending colon). This test helps detect disease or early signs of cancer in the lower large intestine. A sigmoid exam is used to find the cause of:

- Diarrhea or constipation
- Bleeding
- Changes in bowel habits

The test takes about 15 minutes. During the exam, a small flexible tube (sigmoidoscope) is inserted into the rectum and to the descending colon. At the end of the tube is a tiny video camera with a light. This exam may be more helpful than X-rays alone since the doctor:

- May actually view the area
- Can take a small tissue sample (biopsy)

If polyps are found, a biopsy is taken, but no polyps are removed at this time. The doctor often requests a more detailed exam called a colonoscopy to remove any polyps.

Before the Test

48 Hours (2 Business Days) Before the Test

Please call 312-926-2950 to pre-register for your sigmoidoscopy. Have your medical insurance information and Social Security number ready. If you need to cancel or change your appointment, contact your doctor's office. Be sure to complete the *Patient Questionnaire* form and *Patient Medication List* provided by your doctor.

Unless otherwise directed, you may have your normal diet and medications prior to the test. The lower colon must be fully emptied so the doctor can view the area. It is important to follow your doctor's specific bowel prep instructions, which include 3 to 4 Fleet® enemas (saline). The enemas can be purchased at most drug stores.

Day of the Test

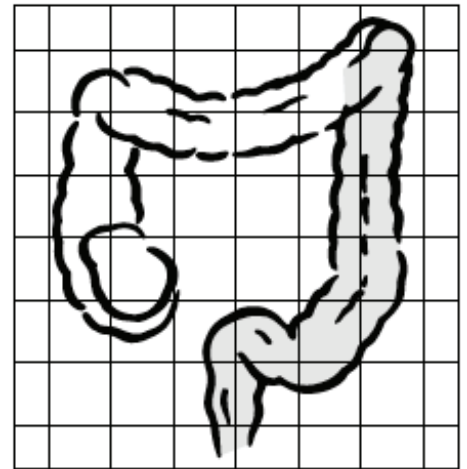
About 1½ hours before your test arrival time, begin your bowel prep. Following the written instructions in the enema box, use **1 Fleet® enema every 10 to 15 minutes**. Try to hold the enema contents for **3 to 5 minutes** and wait for results or bowel movements between each enema. Use all the enemas as instructed. By the **3rd** enema, your stool should be a clear liquid. (If your stool is not clear after the third enema, use the **4th** enema.)

It is helpful to wear loose, comfortable clothes on the day of the exam.

Please arrive at the Gastrointestinal Laboratory (GI Lab) 30 minutes before your test. It is located at the Galter Pavilion, 201 E. Huron St. Take the elevators to the 4th floor and go to the front desk check-in area.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 E. Huron, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions; 1st floor of Prentice (including the Prentice 24 hour desk near the Superior entrance).

After you change into a hospital gown, the doctor will explain the exam and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a written consent form. An IV (into the vein) line is inserted into your hand or arm only if the doctor plans on giving medicine to relax you.



The shaded area is examined during the flexible sigmoidoscopy.

During the Exam

Before the test begins, the nurse will help you lie on an exam table on your left side. Once you are comfortable, the doctor will slowly insert the sigmoidoscope into your rectum and advance it to the lower intestine. This may cause some cramping as the scope moves through the curves of the large intestine. During the exam, the nurse may ask you to turn on your back. You may feel bloating. This is due to the air used to expand the folds of the intestine for easier viewing.

Pictures of the lining of the intestine can be seen on a television monitor. If polyps or abnormal tissue are noted, a biopsy may be done and a thin wire will be inserted into the scope to remove a small tissue sample. This is not painful.

After the Exam

The nurse will ask you to lie on your left side to allow you to pass gas. This also helps relieve any cramping and bloating you may feel.

Unless you are otherwise instructed, you may resume your diet and routine medication after you leave the GI Lab. You will be given written instructions before you leave.

Test Results

The doctor discusses the exam results with you or your family on the day of the test. A follow-up doctor's visit to go over your exam and biopsy results may be needed. Biopsy results usually are ready 5 to 7 days after your test.

When to Call the Doctor

After the exam, you may notice a small amount of blood in your bowel movements. This is normal. However, contact your doctor if you have:

- Severe abdominal pain
- Fever higher than 100.5° F
- Chills
- Rectal bleeding more than 1/2 cup (4 oz)

If you have any questions about this test, please contact the GI Lab patient care coordinator at 312-926-7614.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar a el departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.

Northwestern Memorial is an equal opportunity employer that welcomes, respects and serves with dignity all people and does not discriminate, including in hiring, or employment, or admission, or access to, or treatment in its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, handicap, age, Vietnam or other veteran status, sexual orientation or any other status protected by relevant law. To arrange for TDD/TTY, auxiliary aids and foreign language interpretation services, call the Patient Representative department at 312-926-3112, TDD number 312-926-6363. Issues related to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 should be directed to the director of Employee Relations or designee at 312-926-7297.

Developed by: Gastrointestinal Laboratory

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For more information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit www.nmh.org.

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