



What Is A Sigmoidoscopy?

Sigmoidoscopy is a procedure used to view the rectum and the lower colon (large bowel). This test can also help find the source of abdominal pain, bleeding, and changes in bowel habits. It is done using a sigmoidoscope, a flexible tube with a viewing lens and light.

Preparing For the Procedure

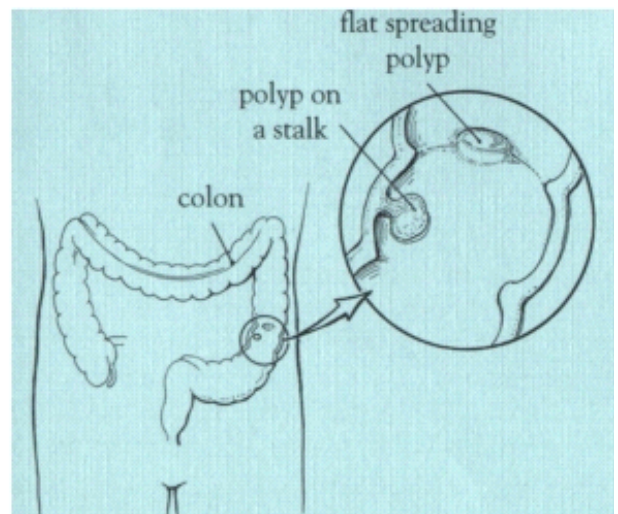
Your doctor will have gone over with you any health conditions you may have and any medications you may take. Be sure your doctor is aware of all your health conditions and medications. Your doctor will have also gone over the risks of the test. These include bleeding and bowel puncture. Your rectum and colon must be empty for the test, so be sure to follow the diet and prep instructions exactly. Otherwise the test may need to be rescheduled.

During the Test

Sigmoidoscopy is done in the doctor's office or in an endoscopy unit at a hospital. You will be lying on your left side. The doctor will perform a digital rectal exam to check for anal and rectal problems. The rectum is lubricated and the scope is inserted. There is often a feeling of pressure, bloating or cramping when air is pumped into the colon (to better view the area) or when the scope goes around bends in the colon. It's okay to pass gas during the procedure.

Viewing the Lower Colon

The lower colon is viewed while the scope is slowly pulled out. The doctor may take a small sample (biopsy) of any abnormal areas. Small polyps, if found, may be removed. If any large polyps are found, your doctor will likely request that you have a colonoscopy (a complete examination of the colon) to remove the polyp. Colonoscopy can also check the remainder of your colon for the presence of other polyps.



After Your Sigmoidoscopy

Usually you will discuss the results with your doctor right away, unless you are having other tests. You may have bloating and cramping. Try to pass all the gas right after the test. After the test you can go back to your normal eating and activities unless instructed otherwise by your doctor. Be sure to call your doctor if you notice pain, fever, or excessive bleeding. Slight bleeding or spotting is normal.