

## Endoscopy – Flexible-sigmoidoscopy

### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

### Guidance for Patients

Your GP/Consultant has recommended a Flexible-sigmoidoscopy; a procedure to look at the lower part of your colon using a thin, flexible camera (endoscope). You will be provided with a written information leaflet that details specific instructions relating to your colonoscopy and your medications, including the specific laxative preparation for this.

Common reasons for having a Flexible-sigmoidoscopy include:

- Weight loss and abdominal pain
- Rectal bleeding
- Iron-deficiency anaemia
- Changes in bowel habit
- Surveillance for conditions such as colonic polyps, Inflammatory Bowel Disease or colorectal cancer

Whilst you are waiting for your procedure, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle so please see our general health advice on the [My Planned Care website](#). Your GP/Consultant may recommend an alternative management or treatment to support your symptoms. It is important that you consider these options too in the short term to support your well-being. This may include:

- Lifestyle changes
- Medication

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

#### GP surgeries are still open

If your condition is getting worse, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice. Whilst your GP does not have access to the hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it. When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition.

#### Hospital contact details

If you need to get in touch with the hospital team, the number and email should be on the hospital appointment letter or alternatively, you can contact the Trust's Switchboard on 01244 365000 who will be able to direct you to the relevant department. Please note we will not give explicit clinical advice via telephone/email until you have been reviewed by a consultant first.

### Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Life Threatening Emergencies

For life threatening emergencies such as severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.