

## Gastroenterology – Sigmoidoscopy

### Introduction

The COVID-19 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. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

When you are waiting for further treatment, it can sometimes feel like a long wait. The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health.

The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider will consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen.

The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

Your consultant has recommended a flexible sigmoidoscopy. This is a procedure to look at the inside of your colon (large bowel) using a thin flexible camera (endoscope). The test will look at the lower half of your large bowel.

You will be provided with a patient information leaflet and instructions that detail the procedure and will include any tablets (laxative) you may need to take beforehand or you may have been advised you will have an enema on arrival to the department to clear out the bowel which you will be given by the nurses.

The procedure takes around 25 minutes and you will be offered entonox (gas and air) if required as the procedure can be a little uncomfortable.

If you have not received this information please contact the endoscopy admissions team on 01305 255701

# My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

## Guidance for Patients

Common reasons you have been referred for a flexible sigmoidoscopy:

- Rectal bleeding
- Severe Haemorrhoids or piles that may require treatment
- Changes in bowel habit
- Surveillance follow up post surgery.

You will need to bring a list of medications to your appointment, along with a dressing gown, slippers and bag for your belongings. If you are taking iron tablets or supplements you must stop for 7 days before the procedure.

Please contact the Endoscopy patient helpline if you have diabetes or are taking any blood thinning medications.

Contact number: 01305 253152. Please leave a message if the phone is not answered and you will receive a return call within 24 hours. This service is available Monday - Friday 08.00-17.00

You can access endoscopy videos and further patient information by using the Dorset County Hospital website at [dchft.nhs.uk](http://dchft.nhs.uk) - A-Z of services - Endoscopy.

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

If your symptoms are worsening you can contact your GP or use our endoscopy helpline for advice on 01305 253152

There are also resources available at NHS.UK for specific conditions and the following websites which offer useful advice on how to manage symptoms whilst you are waiting for your procedure:

Crohns and Colitis - <https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/>

Diverticular disease - [NHS.UK](http://NHS.UK) or [gutscharity.org.uk](http://gutscharity.org.uk)

IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) [NHS.UK](http://NHS.UK) or <https://www.theibsnetwork.org/>

### Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it is 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 something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

### Contact Us

Please contact the endoscopy helpline on 01305 253152 mon-Fri 08.00-17.00 and we will return your call within 24 hours.