

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



Sigmoidoscopy

What is a sigmoidoscopy?

Your doctor has suggested you have a sigmoidoscopy as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. A sigmoidoscopy allows the doctor to look inside the rectum and sigmoid colon. The colon is the lower portion of the GI tract and is about 5 feet long. The sigmoid colon is the last 1 to 2 feet of the colon near the rectum. Your doctor will use a small flexible tube to see inside the sigmoid colon. Your doctor may also do a biopsy and remove any polyps (small growths) found inside your sigmoid colon during the sigmoidoscopy. During a biopsy a small amount of the tissue is taken from the lining of the colon. The polyps and tissue can be studied closely to help determine your diagnosis and the best treatment for you. Based on the exam, your doctor may recommend you also have a colonoscopy. A colonoscopy allows the doctor to look inside the entire colon, not just the last 1 to 2 feet.

How do you get ready for the test?

Your colon will need to be clean thoroughly to complete the test. If this is not done, we will need to reschedule the test. Please follow these instructions closely to clean your colon.

Planning ahead:

- **Purchase two 4 ½ ounce Fleet enemas without mineral oil** from a grocery store or pharmacy. You do **not** need a prescription.

The day of the test:

- **One hour** before leaving for the sigmoidoscopy use the two enemas. Use one enema right after the other. Keep the liquid from both enemas **in for at least five minutes and then go to the bathroom.**

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- Check in at the front desk at the time your test is scheduled.

What is done during the test?

When you arrive the nurse will explain what will be done before, during and after the sigmoidoscopy. If you have any questions, please ask. You will be monitored closely during the test.

You will lie on your side during the sigmoidoscopy. You may feel some pressure and cramping as the tube is passed slowly in the colon.

Once the sigmoidoscopy is done you will rest. Your doctor will determine when you are able to go home.

How long will the test take?

Plan on being at National Jewish Health for at least 1 to 2 hours, although sometimes people stay longer.

How do you get to your test?

On the day of your scheduled test, check in at the Front Desk. If you have questions please call 303-398-1355. Also, if you need to cancel the appointment please call. Also, if you need to cancel the appointment or change the time please call.

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