Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

Your caregiver has ordered a flexible sigmoidoscopy. This is an exam to evaluate your lower colon. In this exam your colon is cleansed and a short *fiber optic* tube is inserted through your rectum and into your colon. The fiber optic scope (*endoscope*) is a short bundle of enclosed flexible small glass fibers. It lights up the area examined and allows your caregiver to see. You do not have to worry about glass breakage in the endoscope. Discomfort is usually minimal. Sedatives and pain medications are generally not required. This exam helps to detect *tumors* (lumps), polyps, *inflammation* (swelling and soreness), and areas of bleeding. It may also be used to take *biopsies.* These are small pieces of tissue taken to look at under a microscope.

PREPARATION FOR EXAM

Eat normally the night before the exam. Your caregiver may order a mild enema or laxative the night before. No eating or drinking should occur after midnight until the procedure is completed. A rectal suppository or enemas may be given in the morning prior to your exam. You will be brought to the examination area in a hospital gown.

BEFORE YOUR EXAM

You should be present one hour prior to your procedure or as directed. Check in at the admissions desk for filling out necessary forms if not preregistered. There will be consent forms to sign prior to the procedure. There is a waiting room for friends and family while you are having your procedure.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams)
- Previous problems with anesthetics or novocaine
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies
- History of blood clots (thrombophlebitis)
- History of bleeding or blood problems
- Previous surgery
- Other health problems

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- There is sometimes a little blood passed with the first bowel movement. Do not be concerned. Because air is often used during the exam, it is not unusual to pass gas and experience *abdominal* (belly) cramping. Walking or a warm pack on your *abdomen* may help with this. **Do not sleep with a heating pad as burns can occur**.
- You may resume all normal eating and activities.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Do not use aspirin or blood thinners if a *biopsy* (tissue sample) was taken. Consult your caregiver for medication usage if biopsies were taken.
- **Call for your results** as instructed by your caregiver. Remember, it is **your responsibility** to obtain the results of your biopsy. *Do not assume everything is fine because you do not hear from your caregiver.*

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- An oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) develops.
- You pass large blood clots or fill a toilet with blood following the procedure. This may also occur 10 to 14 days following the procedure. It is more likely if a biopsy was taken.
- You develop abdominal pain not relieved with medication or that is getting worse rather than better.

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