

Gastroenterology - Flexible 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 are able to 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 has to 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 reviews your case and will make a decision on the urgency of investigations and appointments that is appropriate for you based on the information provided by the referrer.

Our Endoscopy Department sees patients at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital and Poole Hospital routinely six days a week. Our dedicated staff perform more than 23,000 procedures per year by clinicians from a variety of medical and surgical specialties. The unit at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital has five endoscopy rooms and an x-ray suite and the unit at Poole Hospital has three endoscopy rooms.

We provide the following services:

- Gastroscopy
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)
- Endoscopic Ultrasound (EUS)
- Enteroscopy

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- Video Capsule Endoscopy
- HALO radiofrequency ablation (for Barrett's oesophagus)

The Endoscopy Bookings Office will contact you directly to arrange an appointment and you will be provided with a written information booklet that details specific instructions relating to your procedure.

If you have any communication difficulties, require a translation service or have mobility difficulties or any concerns about your appointment please let the Endoscopy Bookings Office know in advance of your appointment and they will ensure that you have the support you require.

Please don't be a DNA!

A DNA is someone who Did Not Attend for a hospital appointment and did not advise us beforehand. Many appointments each year are wasted in this way. If you cannot attend, or need to rearrange your appointment, please contact the Endoscopy Bookings Office.

Further information –

Further information on endoscopy can be read on the NHS Choices website. Please also refer to this site for further information on other endoscopy providers in your area.

NHS Choices - Endoscopy

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/endoscopy/>

Guidance for Patients

Your Doctor has recommended a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy.

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is an investigation which allows the endoscopist to look directly at the lining of your rectum and the lower part of your colon (large bowel). The endoscopist will use a flexible sigmoidoscope; a thin, bendy tube with a light source and camera built into the tip. Flexible sigmoidoscopy is usually performed as a day case. Some preparation is required to ensure the bowel lining is visible, this includes following a simple diet the day before the procedure and using an enema.

Your doctor may have referred you for this procedure in order to investigate symptoms such as rectal bleeding, a change in bowel habit or pain. You may have been referred for further investigation of an abnormality shown on x-ray or as a result of a screening programme. You may also be having the procedure as part of follow-up for surveillance of conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease, bowel cancer or after removal of a polyp. T

The Endoscopy Department is very busy and sometimes appointments are delayed due to emergencies or unforeseen problems. Every effort will be made to see you punctually but it may not always be possible for you to be seen at precisely the time stated on your appointment letter. The procedure usually lasts between 10 and 20 minutes although it may take longer in some cases. You should expect to be in the hospital for 3-4 hours so that you can be admitted and recovered safely and it is advisable to bring a book or something to read to help you pass the time. Please remember, the time of your appointment is not the time you will have your test. It takes time to safely admit you and prepare you for your procedure. You

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may observe others being called before you who may have arrived after you, this is because we have several lists running at the same time and not everyone will be having the same procedure.

Do not bring valuables or large quantities of money into the hospital as we cannot accept responsibility for them.

You will need to get undressed for your procedure. We will provide you with a hospital gown to wear and shorts to protect your dignity. Some people like to bring a dressing gown and slippers with them. Your clothing and belongings will remain with you at all times. It is advisable to wear loose, comfortable clothing as you may feel slightly bloated with air following your procedure.

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is a short procedure which most people find manageable without sedation. Some discomfort is expected but it is short-lived. We encourage you to avoid sedation if possible, the benefits of this are that you are able to leave the department as soon as you wish after the procedure, independently and are not inconvenienced by the restrictions associated with sedation.

Some people benefit from using Entonox (gas and air), inhaling to ease discomfort as needed. Since Entonox wears off quickly after the procedure no driving or supervision restrictions are imposed, however it may not be suitable for everyone. The admitting nurse will talk through the most suitable and safest option for you.

If you choose to have sedation this will make you feel relaxed and drowsy but it is unlikely to send you to sleep. It will reduce your awareness of time and may make you forget the procedure itself. You must be supervised by an adult for 12 hours after the procedure and for 24 hours you must not drive any vehicle, work, operate heavy machinery, sign any legally binding document, drink alcohol or take sedative medication, or look after babies or young children.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your symptoms deteriorate please contact your GP who will then get in touch with us if required.

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. 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

Endoscopy Bookings Office:

Bournemouth site: Telephone - 0300 019 4667 (lines are open Monday-Friday, 0830-1630)

Email - Endoscopy.Enquiries@uhd.nhs.uk

Poole site: Telephone - 0300 019 2939 (lines are open Monday-Friday, 0830-1630)

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The contents of this information has been reviewed and approved by the Medical Care Group Board of University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust