

# A Note of Thanks to Doctor Rees

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With a free rhythm, not too fast (♩=120)

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 3/4 time. It consists of eight lines of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics underneath. The notes are simple quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are: "Doc - tor Rees (co - lon): I'm wri - ting this let - ter To thank you for what I have re - cent - ly learned. Af - ter our talk, I now un - der - stand bet - ter. That would not be so, had you not been con - cerned. Nee - ding more facts, I pe - rused the col - lec - tion The li - bra - ry keeps; I found quite a good book. So now, I know much a - bout rec - tal in - spec - tion, Though rec - tums are pla - ces I rare - ly need look."

Doc - tor Rees (co - lon): I'm wri - ting this let - ter  
To thank you for what I have re - cent - ly learned.  
Af - ter our talk, I now un - der - stand bet - ter.  
That would not be so, had you not been con - cerned.  
Nee - ding more facts, I pe - rused the col - lec - tion  
The li - bra - ry keeps; I found quite a good book.  
So now, I know much a - bout rec - tal in - spec - tion,  
Though rec - tums are pla - ces I rare - ly need look.

Complete lyrics are found on the other side

# A Note of Thanks to Doctor Rees

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Doctor Rees (colon): I'm writing this letter  
To thank you for what I have recently learned.  
After our talk, I now understand better.  
That would not be so, had you not been concerned.  
Needing more facts, I perused the collection  
The library keeps; I found quite a good book.  
So now, I know much about rectal inspection,  
Though rectums are places I rarely need look.

When we succeed with this change we're now trying,  
When few folk will smoke, through persuasion and laws,  
We'll see a change in statistics of dying,  
With lung cancer being a less prominent cause.  
Next behind lungs on the list as a locus  
Where tumors develop, in rich lands like these,  
Are rectum and colon, and so we must focus  
On them, in our work of preventing disease.

Some say it helps to consume much more fibre  
And rarely eat Haagen-Daas, lamb chops, or Brie;  
Those vegetarians I've met in cyber-  
Space out on the Internet tend to agree.  
But, for the millions who won't change their diet,  
Although that would also be good for the heart,  
There is a technique, if they're willing to try it,  
That often ensures no malignancies start.

The flexible sigmoidoscope was invented  
To access our guts through the holes in their ends  
Where feces well coloured and gases ill scented  
Both exit the body. It threads through the bends  
In the sigmoid, the part of the colon just over  
The rectum that's shaped like an "S", and can go  
Inside the left colon. It's used to discover  
Conditions for which, perhaps, no symptoms show.

Polyps are growths that should not be occurring.  
The ones in the bowel, when young, are benign,  
But they can enlarge, and there's danger deferring  
Removal, because, when they're old, they malign.  
Most bowel polyps, statistics have shown us,  
Are found near the sigmoid. A primary care  
Physician can look for them, and, as a bonus,  
Remove them, by using a scope and a snare.

Fibres bring outside light in to illumine  
An image that's focussed through optical glass.  
Three millimetres wide, there's enough room in  
The biopsy channel for thin tools to pass.  
One has a loop in its end, which is tightened  
To snare polyps' bases, then current's applied,  
And heat cuts their stalks as the flesh becomes whitened.  
A biopsy's made from the parts that weren't fried.

And so, Doctor Rees, thanks again for these verses  
That I'd not have written without your request.  
We, who must visit physicians and nurses,  
Should try to keep current with what they suggest.  
As it ascends, up that slippery slope in  
The base of my gut, every three years or two,  
When I feel the flexible sigmoidoscope in  
My rectum, I'll surely be thinking of you.

In the early summer of 1993, Dr. Carolyn Rees, a physician then practicing in San Jose, California, heard some of my safe sex songs and suggested this as another subject likely to interest me. She briefly described the instrument and its purpose, and I later consulted these two references before completing the song in 1994:

Sudhir K. Dutta and Edward J. Kowalewski. Flexible Sigmoidoscopy for Primary Care Physicians. New York: Alan R. Liss, Inc., 1987

Ronald M. Katon, Emmet B. Keefe, and Clifford S. Melnyk. Flexible Sigmoidoscopy. Toronto: Grune & Stratton, Inc., 1985

In 2013, I slightly revised the second line of verse 6, to reflect the fact that the camera is now small enough to be included at the tip of the sigmoidoscope itself; previously, the image was conveyed out of the sigmoidoscope via a second bundle of optical glass fibers. As of August, 2013, the following web references were among many that were available:

Alexandria Gastroenterology page "Procedures", <http://alexandriagi.com/procedures.html> (after clicking the within-page link to "Flexible Sigmoidoscopy")

Timmins and District Hospital page "Flexible Sigmoidoscopy", <http://www.tadh.com/?view=pageView&pageid=100000021>