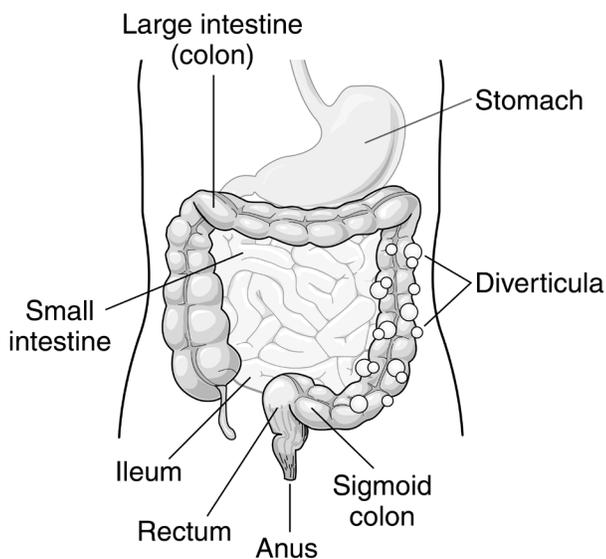


Diverticulosis

Diverticulosis is the presence of many small balloon-like sacs (diverticula) in the wall of the large intestine (colon). This disease rarely occurs before the age of 30. It may affect up to half of all people over 60 years of age. A high fiber diet protects against this disease. People who lack fiber in their diet are more likely to get diverticula in the colon as they grow older.



Symptoms

Most people with this disease have no symptoms. You may notice a change in bowel function. This may be constipation, cramping, abdominal pain or diarrhea.

Diverticula may become infected or inflamed. People often have pain in their left lower abdomen and fever. If this happens contact your doctor. You may also see rectal bleeding. This may be severe, but usually does not hurt. **People who pass large amounts of bloody diarrhea need medical help right away.**

Diet

There is no known medical cure. By increasing the fiber in your diet, you may reduce the symptoms. This may also prevent more diverticula from forming.

High fiber foods include:

- Fresh or stewed fruits
- Vegetables like broccoli, celery, carrots, cabbage
- Bran cereal
- Grains
- Beans (kidney, pinto, lima, navy)

Breakfast cereals, like All-Bran[®], Fiber One[®], and Bran Buds[®], are high in fiber. Try mixing them with other cereals. Try to get about 30 grams of fiber a day. Eating unprocessed bran (about 3 tablespoons) is an easy way to get enough fiber. Bran should be taken with plenty of fluids. You can mix it with breakfast cereals, yogurt, or applesauce.

You do not need to avoid nuts, popcorn or seeds just because you have this disease.

Who to Call

If you have questions about diverticulosis, contact your primary care provider.