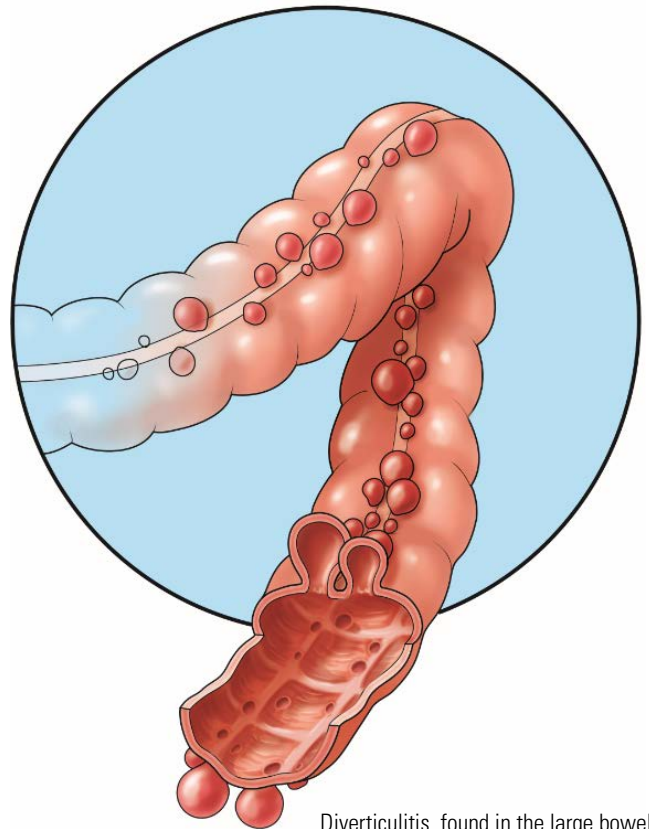


## DIVERTICULITIS

# What Is Diverticulitis?

By age 50, about half of people have diverticulosis, a health issue in which **pockets (or diverticula) form in the wall of the large bowel**. In about 5 percent of people, these pockets become infected or swollen, which is called diverticulitis.

- ▶ Diverticulitis can be painful.
- ▶ It often comes about quickly.
- ▶ Diverticulitis may need to be treated with an antibiotic.
- ▶ About 20 – 40 percent of people with diverticulitis have multiple flare-ups, often within five years of the first attack.
- ▶ There are steps you can take to lower the risk of future attacks.



Diverticulitis, found in the large bowel.



The information provided by the AGA Institute is not medical advice and should not be considered a replacement for seeing a medical professional.

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## DIVERTICULITIS

# Symptoms

Symptoms of diverticulitis include:

- Belly pain and soreness, often on the lower left side.
- Fever.
- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea (loose stool) or constipation (hard stool or trouble passing stool).
- Nausea.
- Throwing up.
- Cramping in your stomach.
- Chills.



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## DIVERTICULITIS

# Getting Tested

Diverticulitis can often be suspected based on your past health issues and a physical exam, though other tests may be needed, as well. Your doctor will talk to you about what is best for you.

### CT Scan

- This is the most common test to find diverticulitis.
- You will either drink a special liquid and/or have the liquid put into your vein, which will help light your organs on an X-ray so that your doctor is able to see them better.

### Other Tests

- **Blood test:** You may have blood drawn for further evaluation.
- **Stool sample:** You may submit your stool to be looked at under a microscope.
- **Digital rectal exam:** Your doctor may look at your rectum and feel it using his or her finger.
- **Colonoscopy:** A colonoscopy may be performed after you recover from diverticulitis.



## DIVERTICULITIS

# Treatment

**Uncomplicated diverticulitis is treated with plenty of rest and possibly antibiotics.**

Some people with more severe or complicated diverticulitis may be admitted to the hospital for intensive treatment with intravenous antibiotics, drainage of abscesses or emergency surgery.

Once treated, most people start feeling better within a few days. If your diverticulitis keeps coming back, your doctor may think about doing surgery to remove a part of your colon.

**There are ways to try to stop diverticulitis from coming back, such as:**

### Eat a diet that is high in fiber

- After your diverticulitis is cleared, slowly start adding more fiber to your diet.
- Try eating at least eight grams of fiber in each meal.
- Good foods to have in your meals to get more fiber include:
  - Berries.
  - Beans.
  - Green veggies.
  - Grains/oats.
- **Note:** You do *not* have to avoid seeds, nuts or popcorn.



### Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- How can I tell if I am getting enough fiber in my daily diet?
- Am I healthy enough to start (or carry on with) working out after I get better?
- Is there any reason I should not take aspirin or other pain relievers?
- Should I get a colonoscopy?



## Exercise

- Working out for 30 minutes three times a week could help stop future attacks.
- Your workout should get your heart pumping and make you start to sweat.
- Good workouts include:
  - Jogging.
  - Swimming.
  - Aerobics classes.
  - Competitive sports.

### Diverticulitis – What to Know:

- ▶ Diverticulitis is when pockets form on the wall of your colon and become infected.
- ▶ Diverticulitis can cause bad pain in your lower belly, fever and change in your stool.
- ▶ Diverticulitis can often be treated with rest, a special diet and sometimes antibiotics.
- ▶ Eating a high-fiber diet and working out 90 minutes a week may help stop diverticulitis attacks in the future.



## DIVERTICULITIS

# Things to Be Aware Of



Issues that could come from diverticulitis include:

- A block in the colon.
- An infection.
- A tear (perforation) in the colon.
- An abscess.
- Urinary tract infections.

**In rare cases**, diverticulitis can be a warning sign for colon cancer.

- Getting a colonoscopy can rule this out.
- If you have not had a colonoscopy lately, talk to your doctor about getting one a couple months after you feel better.

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