

DIV – DP DIVERTICULITIS – DISEASE PROCESS
DIV – N DIVERTICULITIS - NUTRITION
DIV - TX DIVERTICULITIS - TREATMENT

Diverticulosis

What is it?

Diverticulosis is a condition where small pockets form inside the wall of the large intestine (colon). If these pockets become infected, it can cause pain. This infection is called diverticulitis. A doctor can order a test called colonoscopy or a barium enema to find out if you have diverticulosis.

How do they form?

A healthy colon is a flexible tube lined with muscles. These muscles move stool (waste) through your colon and out of your body. Eating foods that have fiber and drinking lots of water helps to make stools soft. A soft stool passes smoothly through your colon. When you do not get enough fiber and water, the stool becomes harder. Then the muscles in the colon have to work harder to move the stools through your colon. This extra pressure can cause the inside of the colon wall to bulge out and form pockets called diverticulum.

What are the symptoms?

Some people do not have symptoms. The most common symptoms are:

- Mild cramping
- Bloating
- Constipation
- Rectal bleeding (any sign of blood in your stool or on the toilet paper, maybe just a small amount should be reported to your doctor).
- If the pockets get infected, symptoms include pain, fever, and chills.

What can I do for diverticulosis?

The two most important things you can do is drink enough water and eat foods high in fiber. Fiber and water both helps the stool stay soft and moves smoothly. Exercise also helps to keep the colon muscles moving. Sometimes your doctor will prescribe a fiber supplement like Metamucil to help soften stools.

How much liquid should I drink?

Most people should drink at least 8 cups of fluids each day. Drinking beverages with bubbles in sodas may cause spasms and pressure in your colon.

How much fiber should I eat?

We all need 25 or 30 grams of fiber each day to keep the colon working. Here are some examples of foods that have fiber.

Examples of High FIBER Foods are:

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| Beans | Brown Rice |
| Vegetables | Whole-grain Breads |
| Fruits | Nuts |
| Corn | Cereals |

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Ideas for adding more Vegetable, Fruit, Dry Beans and Split Peas!

- Add more vegetables to spaghetti sauce and less meat
- Add more vegetables to stews and soups
- Leave the skin on potatoes when possible
- Use fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks
- Add fresh fruits and nuts to salads
- Rinse conned beans with water and add to a salad, dip, or salsa

Experiment with adding more FIBER to the Foods you already made.

Try to substitute whole wheat flour in tortillas, pancakes, bread and other baked goods. For best results use ½ regular white flour and ½ whole wheat flour. For example: If a recipe calls for 2 cups of flour, you can use 1 cup white flour and 1 cup whole wheat flour.

Read the Food Labels!

Look for dietary fiber on the food label. It will be right below Total Carbohydrates. You want to look for the number of fiber grams on the label. A food that is good in fiber will have 2 grams to 5 grams of fiber for each serving.