



# QUESTIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ANSWERS

## **What Is Diverticular Disease?**

Diverticular (di-ver-tik-u-lar) disease is a common problem that develops in a part of the gut (GI tract) called the colon. Pouches or sacs bubble out in the wall of the colon. It is believed diverticular disease results from a **low** fiber diet. **High** fiber foods hold water and soften the stools (BM) making them easier to pass. Hard stools cause a person to strain to have a BM. Straining weakens the colon walls and causes the pouches to form.

There are two types of diverticular disease. They are **diverticulosis** and **diverticulitis**.

### **What is diverticulosis?**

Diverticulosis means the pouches in the colon are not infected or inflamed (swollen and sore). Often there are no signs of diverticulosis. When there are signs, they are mild. They may include:

- cramps in the lower belly
- bloating (swelling of the belly)
- constipation (trouble having a BM)
- painless bleeding from the rectum

### **How can the doctor test for diverticular disease?**

A doctor who is a specialist in GI disease has several ways to test for the disease. Some tests use x-rays. Other tests use bendable tubes with cameras. Your doctor will explain the kind of test he will use and what you can expect.

### **What should I do if I have diverticulosis?**

I should eat a high fiber diet. Foods high in fiber are:

- dried and fresh fruits

- raw vegetables
- whole grains
- dried cooked beans

You can make drinks from high fiber powders such as Metamucil or Citrucel. You can buy these at the drug store.

Drink plenty of fluids, at least six 8-ounce glasses a day, if ok with your doctor.

Remember to always gradually increase fiber intake over several days, with a goal of 25 gm of fiber per day. See attached diet sheet.

### **Should I avoid seeds, nuts and popcorn?**

The rule of thumb is to stay away from seeds, whole nuts and popcorn only if it has caused a problem for you in the past.

### **What is Diverticulitis?**

Diverticulitis occurs when the pouches become inflamed or infected.

### **What are the signs of diverticulitis?**

- fever
- feeling sick to the stomach
- throwing up
- chills
- fever
- cramps
- constipation

### **How to treat diverticulitis**

When the pouches become inflamed the colon needs to rest. Eat a very low fiber, low residue diet. A low residue diet is one that makes small amounts of waste or BM. These foods are on the attached list. Also, a dietician (food expert) can help you choose the right foods. Follow the low-fiber, low-residue diet for one week or per your doctor instructions. See attached sheet. Then you can slowly add high fiber foods.

If you are in the hospital:

- The doctor may put you on a clear liquid diet until the inflammation goes away.
- The doctor may also give you antibiotics (germ-killing medicine) to stop the infection.
- If you have lost a lot of fluid you may get fluid by IV (through a tube attached to a needle in your arm).

### **What colon (gut) problems can diverticulitis cause?**

- bleeding
- infection
- blockages

### **Finding a Doctor**

At St. Vincent Charity Hospital, we have doctors who specialize the treatment of stomach disorders. To contact one of our doctors call the

Physician Referral Line

1-800-223-8662 or

Visit our website at [www.stvincentcharity.com](http://www.stvincentcharity.com)

Our doctors serve with a deep respect for all. Their goal is to give the best care and education whether or not a person can pay.

### **St. Vincent Charity Hospital**

2351 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44115

216-861-6200

TTY:Ohio Relay 1-800-750-0750

### **St. Luke's Health Center**

11201 Shaker Boulevard

Cleveland, Ohio 44104

216-721-6900

### **Resources:**

You can also obtain information at the  
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders

P.O. Box 170864

Milwaukee, WI 53217-8076

[www.iffgd.org](http://www.iffgd.org)

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**ST. VINCENT CHARITY  
MEDICAL CENTER**

*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System*

## DIVERTICULOSIS

### High Fiber Diet During No Inflammation (Diverticulosis)

<u>Foods</u>	<u>Allowed</u>	<u>Avoid</u>
<b>Beverages</b>	All beverages are allowed, but are not a good source of fiber.	None
<b>Breads/Starches</b>	Whole grain breads and cereals, breads with dried fruits, cooked dried beans & brown rice, wheat noodles, potatoes with skins. They are higher in fiber White & cornbread allowed but are not a good sources of fiber Higher fiber breads have at least 2gms of fiber per slice.	None
<b>Deserts/Snacks</b>	Made with dried or fresh fruits	None, but popcorn & nuts can be irritating to some people.
<b>Fats</b>	All are allowed but not a good sources of fiber	Limit saturated fat and avoid trans fats
<b>Fruits</b>	All fresh fruits are high in fiber, as well as dried fruit & fruit juice with pulp Eat canned fruits less because they are lower in fiber.	None
<b>Vegetables</b>	Raw or steamed veggies are better sources of fiber Leave skins on when possible	None but fried vegetables may cause stomach upset
<b>Meat</b>	Lean meat and fish, though not a good source of fiber	Fried meats can cause stomach upset
<b>Milk</b>	All milk products,	None

cheese and yogurt but not  
a source of fiber  
unless added such as Fiber One®  
yogurt

**Diverticulosis continued**

<b><u>Foods</u></b>	<b><u>Allowed</u></b>	<b><u>Avoid</u></b>
<b>Seasoning</b>	Ground spices Whole spices allowed if you have not had a problem with them in the past.	None
<b>Soup</b>	Soup made with whole grain noodles, brown rice, barley, beans are best	None
<b>Sweets</b>	All sweets are allowed but are not a good source of fiber.	None

## DIVERTICULITIS

### Low fiber, Low Residue Diet To Be Followed During Inflammation (diverticulitis)

<b><u>Food</u></b>	<b><u>Allowed</u></b>	<b><u>Avoid</u></b>
<b>Beverages</b>	All beverages are allowed	Alcohol
<b>Breads/Starches</b>	White, light rye (no seeds) milled wheat bread, cornbread, biscuits, pancakes All refined cooked cereals yams and potatoes without skin, potatoes, pasta, white rice & grits	Bread, crackers with seeds, nuts, raisins Whole grain or bran cereal, brown or wild rice, barley, skins on
<b>Deserts/Snacks</b>	Ice cream, jello pudding pretzels, cookies	Any made with berries, coconut, dried fruit, figs, nuts, raisins, seeds, popcorn
<b>Fats</b>	All fat is allowed	Deep fat frying if it bothers you
<b>Fruits</b>	Banana, orange or grapefruit without the inner skin cooked apples, canned fruits Any fruit juice	Raw hard fruits, prunes, berries, pineapple, raisins, dried fruit
<b>Vegetables</b>	Soft cooked vegetables Iceberg lettuce	Raw vegetables, vegetables w/ skins
<b>Meat/Protein</b>	Cheese, eggs, creamy peanut butter, beef, chicken, veal, lamb, pork, fish, turkey	Spiced meats, sausages, made with whole spices, crunchy peanut butter

<b>Milk</b>	All milk based products	None
<b>Seasoning</b>	All milled ground spices	No whole spices like peppercorns, poppy or sesame seeds

**Diverticulitis continued**

<b><u>Foods</u></b>	<b><u>Allowed</u></b>	<b><u>Avoid</u></b>
<b>Soup</b>	Any made from foods on this allowed list	Any made with foods not from this allowed list
<b>Sweets</b>	Sugar, jelly, honey, syrup, marshmallows, chocolate, cocoa, candy without nuts, seeds or dried fruits	Candy with coconut, nuts, dried fruit, jam, preserves, marmalade