



An operating division of Infinite Health Collaborative

DIVERTICULOSIS

WHAT IS DIVERTICULOSIS?

Diverticulosis of the colon is a common condition affecting many Americans. *Diverticulosis* is not the same as *diverticulitis*. Most people over age 50 have diverticulosis although it may occur earlier in life. Diverticulosis is the presence of out pouchings (diverticula) that develop on the wall of the large intestine (colon). They occur at weak areas on the colon wall and are most often found on the left side (sigmoid colon), but can be found throughout the colon.

WHAT CAUSES DIVERTICULOSIS?

Diverticulosis occurs gradually over time and occurs most commonly because of increased pressure in the colon. The amount of fiber and fluid intake affects the pressure inside the colon. When fiber and fluid are lacking, the stool becomes hard and dry. The muscles in the wall of the colon need to squeeze with greater force, which can lead to a diverticulum in a weak spot of the colon.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DIVERTICULOSIS?

Most people with diverticulosis have no symptoms. Some patients with diverticulosis can have painless rectal bleeding although there are many other causes for this. 10-25% of patients with diverticulosis will go on to develop diverticulitis which is inflammation and perforation of a diverticulum. This may cause left sided and lower abdominal pain, fevers, and changes in bowel habits.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT DIVERTICULOSIS?

The prevention and treatment of diverticulosis are the same - diet and fiber supplementation. You should increase your daily intake of fiber to 25-35 grams along with 64 ounces of water. High-fiber foods and supplemental fiber products (Metamucil®, Citrucel®, Konsyl®, or store brand equivalent) add bulk to the stools, which helps achieve regular bowel habits. Fiber holds water, which helps to soften the stool. Soft stool requires less pressure to move it through the colon.

FOR SCHEDULING, PLEASE CALL OUR CLINIC

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