

AGA Patient Education Section

Diverticulitis

Diverticulosis occurs when pockets (diverticula) form in the wall of the large bowel. Approximately half of people older than age 50 have diverticulosis. When these pockets become infected or swollen, it is called diverticulitis. Diverticulitis often comes about quickly, and it can be painful. Diverticulitis develops in approximately 5% of people with diverticulosis.

Symptoms

- Belly pain, often on the lower left side.
- Fever.
- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation.
- Nausea or throwing up.
- Cramping in your stomach.
- Chills.

Getting Tested

Diverticulitis often can be found during a routine doctor's examination, but your doctor also may perform other tests, as follows:

- Computed tomography test.
- Blood test.
- Stool sample.
- Digital rectal examination.
- Radiographs.
- Colonoscopy.

Treatment

Uncomplicated diverticulitis is treated with a low-fiber diet, rest, and antibiotics. Patients with bad or complicated diverticulitis may be admitted to the hospital for treatment with intravenous antibiotics, drainage of abscesses, or surgery.

To prevent diverticulitis from coming back:

- Eat a diet that is high in fiber.
- If obese, lose weight.
- Workout regularly.

For more information on diverticulitis, talk to your gastroenterologist and visit <https://www.gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/topic/diverticulitis>.

