DIVERTICULAR DISEASE DIET INFORMATION

01604 745036 (Northampton)
01536 492317 (Kettering)

nhft.nhs.uk/dietetics
WHAT IS DIVERTICULAR DISEASE?

A diverticulum is a pouch that forms with a narrow neck on the inner lining of the colon/large bowel. This occurs as a result of localised pressure on a weak area of the bowel wall. It tends to develop in later life and the most common site for diverticula to develop is the lower part of the colon. The presence of diverticula is often referred to as diverticulosis.

People who suffer from constipation have a higher incidence of diverticulosis and would benefit from an adequate source of fibre in their diet.
RISK FACTORS

- People aged over 50 years and people who eat low amounts of dietary fibre.
- Obesity (having a Body Mass Index of 30kg/m² or more) is an important risk factor in young people, although the development of diverticular disease is rare in people younger than 40 years.
- Complicated diverticular disease has an increased frequency in patients who smoke, use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and paracetamol, and those who are obese and have low-fibre diets.

MANAGEMENT OF AN ACUTE EPISODE - FLARE UP (KNOWN AS DIVERTICULITIS)

Medication, including antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, antispasmodics drugs and a temporarily low fibre diet may be required, as well as increasing your fluid consumption. If solid foods are not tolerated a liquid diet may be recommended to give your bowel a rest.

Avoid poorly digested foods as discussed with your dietitian, such as:
- seeds and nuts,
- sweetcorn,
- skins on fruit,
- skins on vegetables and
- skins on potatoes.

While symptoms remain, the diet should be fairly bland. After an acute episode has settled it is important to follow a varied and healthy diet and it is advised to increase fibre and fluid consumption.

DIVERTICULITIS

Diverticulitis can occur when food gets stuck in the pouch and becomes infected, causing pain and discomfort. Pain is generally made worse by eating and eases on passing a poo.

Symptoms to look out for include:
- Localised abdominal pain - usually in lower left of your stomach
- Cramping
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Fever and chills
- Rectal bleeding
- Bloating
LONG TERM MANAGEMENT

Approximately three quarters of patients with anatomical diverticulosis remain without symptoms. Having a good fluid intake can reduce the risk of an acute episode known as a flare up.

Increase fibre in the diet by:

- Changing to a high fibre breakfast cereal such as All Bran, Bran Flakes, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Wheat flakes or Porridge
- Eating more wholemeal, rye, granary bread or high fibre white instead of ordinary white or brown bread, Using whole wheat pasta and brown rice
- Try to eat fresh fruit every day and eat the skins where possible
- Eat plenty of vegetables and where possible eat the skins e.g. jacket potatoes
- Eating more pulses e.g. peas, beans, lentils - add them to soups/stews/casseroles - you can purchase them ready soaked, cooked in cans or dried.

Aim for 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day. A portion is:

- 1 medium fruit = apple/banana
- 2 small fruits = apricots/plums
- 2 heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables
- 1 small bowl of salad
HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Fibre can be divided into two types: soluble and insoluble. Both help food move through your gut.
- Fibre absorbs water like a sponge and this eases the passage of food wastes through the bowels.
- It is important to drink 8-10 cups of fluid each day such as tea, coffee, water, fruit juice and squash.
- On average most people in the UK get about 18g of fibre a day. You should be aiming for close to 30g per day.
# HIGH FIBRE MEAL PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Food and Drinks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BREAKFAST</strong></td>
<td>Fruit Juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Fibre cereal and milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wholemeal bread/toast with fat spread and course cut</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marmalade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tea/Coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MID-MORNING</strong></td>
<td>Glass squash/water</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MID-DAY MEAL</strong></td>
<td>Meat/fish/pulses/eggs/cheese</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large helping of vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potatoes boiled/baked in their skins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or brown rice/wholemeal pasta</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh or stewed fruit/pudding made</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with fruits and wholemeal flour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glass of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MID AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td>Tea/coffee/squash/water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVENING MEAL</strong></td>
<td>Vegetable soup with wholemeal roll</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or Wholemeal pasta with sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or Wholemeal bread with fat spread</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit/Bran biscuit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Glass of water</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEDTIME</strong></td>
<td>Fresh fruit/digestive biscuits/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crispbread</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glass of water/squash/milk drink</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Meal**

**Food and Drinks**

**BREAKFAST**
- Fruit Juice
- High Fibre cereal and milk
- Wholemeal bread/toast with fat spread and course cut
- Marmalade
- Tea/Coffee

**MID-MORNING**
- Glass squash/water

**MID-DAY MEAL**
- Meat/fish/pulses/eggs/cheese
- Large helping of vegetables
- Potatoes boiled/baked in their skins
- Or brown rice/wholemeal pasta
- Fresh or stewed fruit/pudding made with fruits and wholemeal flour
- Glass of water

**MID AFTERNOON**
- Tea/coffee/squash/water

**EVENING MEAL**
- Vegetable soup with wholemeal roll
- Or Wholemeal pasta with sauce
- Or Wholemeal bread with fat spread
- Fruit/Bran biscuit
- Glass of water

**BEDTIME**
- Fresh fruit/digestive biscuits/Crispbread
- Glass of water/squash/milk drink