

Diet and Diverticular Disease

What is diverticular disease?

Diverticular disease occurs when small pouches develop in the lining of the large bowel. If these pockets become inflamed or infected, this is known as diverticulitis.

Symptoms can include:

- Altered bowel habits - Diarrhoea and/or constipation
- Abdominal pain and bloating
- Bleeding

What do I eat while I am unwell?

You will need to follow low fibre diet until your symptoms settle down. This is to minimise irritation to the bowel while it is inflamed. It is not designed to be followed for a long period of time.

Your Doctor has recommended you follow a low fibre diet for:

What do I eat when I have recovered?

When not experiencing symptoms, a high fibre diet is recommended. It is best to gradually increase your fibre intake to allow your bowels to adjust to the change. It is also important that you drink plenty of fluid on a high fibre diet. Please ask if you are unsure about how much to drink.

Why follow a high fibre diet when well?

Diverticular disease is more common in countries where people eat a low fibre diet. It is thought that constipation may cause increased pressure in the colon, resulting in pockets forming at the weakest part of the colon wall. A high fibre diet and adequate fluid can reduce pressure and prevents the formation of these pockets.

What is fibre?

Fibre is part of the plant that cannot be digested. Fibre passes through the digestive tract largely unchanged.

What does fibre do?

The role of fibre is to promote healthy bowel function. It adds bulk to the stool and absorbs water to keep it soft, which helps move food and waste through the bowel.

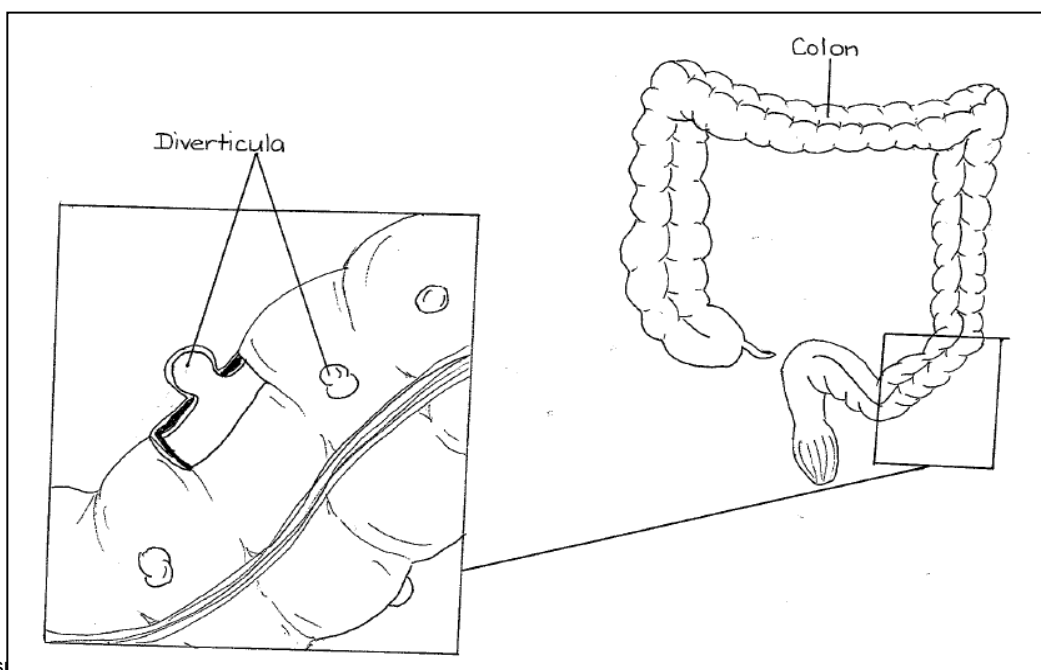
Which foods are high in fibre?

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Wholegrain breads and cereals
- Nuts and seeds
- Legumes e.g. baked beans, lentils, kidney beans, soy beans

FOOD GROUP	LOW FIBRE FOODS	HIGH FIBRE FOODS
Bread, Cereals, Rice, Pasta, Noodles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White bread/ crumpets/ scones/English muffins • Refined breakfast cereals eg <i>Rice Bubbles™</i>, <i>Cornflakes™</i>, <i>Special K™</i> • Instant porridge • White rice/ pasta, sago, tapioca, semolina • White flour, cornflour, custard powder • Plain sweet and savoury biscuits or cakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal/ wholegrain bread, crumpets, fruit bread/ rye bread • Wholegrain breakfast cereals or any with fruit, nuts or coconut eg Muesli, <i>All Bran™</i>, <i>Weetbix™</i> • Rolled oats, oat bran, muesli bars • Brown rice, pasta, maize • Wholemeal flour, wheatgerm • Sweet and savoury biscuits or cakes made with wholemeal flour, nuts, dried fruit or coconut
Vegetables	<p>Ensure all vegetables are peeled and well cooked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato, sweet potato, pumpkin, carrot, zucchini • Cauliflower, broccoli, asparagus spear tips • Tomato and cucumber with skins and seeds removed • Lettuce, cabbage, green beans (chop and chew well) and button mushrooms • Spring onion • Well strained vegetable juice • Tomato puree or paste 	<p>Where possible eat the skin when having vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other salad or vegetables
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pawpaw and melons (no seeds) • Banana (small amount), seedless grapes, cherries • Peeled peaches & nectarine • Well cooked fruit with no skin or pips • Canned fruits except pineapple and mango • Well strained fruit juice 	<p>Where possible eat the skin when having fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fresh fruit • Dried fruit

FOOD GROUP	LOW FIBRE FOODS	HIGH FIBRE FOODS
Dairy foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All varieties of milk Plain yoghurt, custard, vanilla, <i>Fruche™</i>, plain cheese, plain or flavoured icecream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice cream or gelati containing dried fruit, nuts or coconut Products containing “chunky fruit” pieces Flavoured milk with added fibre (Up and Go, Oat Express)
Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All meat, chicken or fish. Tofu Eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legumes eg. baked beans, lentils, soy beans, kidney beans Nuts Peanut butter
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All fats including butter, margarine, salad dressings, mayonnaise Sugar, honey, syrups, icecream toppings Boiled lollies, jubes, chocolate with no fruit, nuts or coconut Spreads without seeds or skin Soup made from allowed ingredients, <i>Bonox™</i> Tea, coffee, alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn Coconut Chocolate with nuts and fruit Chutney and pickles

MYTH: Recent research suggests that avoiding nuts and seeds has no impact on preventing attacks of diverticulitis. Nuts and seeds can be included as part of a balanced, high fibre diet.



Suggested Meal Plan

Sample low fibre diet	Sample high fibre diet
<p>Breakfast Cornflakes™ or Rice-bubbles™ milk apple juice white toast, margarine & honey or vegemite</p> <p>Lunch white bread sandwich chicken and avocado filling vanilla yoghurt</p> <p>Dinner grilled steak mashed potato steamed pumpkin ice-cream and tinned peaches</p> <p>Snacks: Custard, yoghurt, low fibre fruits (e.g. pawpaw, rockmelon, water melon), plain biscuit (e.g., Nice, Milk Coffee, Water Crackers, Jatz)</p>	<p>Breakfast wholegrain cereal such as porridge, All Bran™ or muesli low fat milk banana wholemeal toast</p> <p>Lunch wholemeal or wholegrain sandwich or roll chicken and salad apple fruit yoghurt</p> <p>Dinner grilled steak jacket potato broccoli and corn fruit salad and ice cream</p> <p>Snacks: Fruit, nuts, wholegrain biscuits or muesli bars</p>

For further information contact your Dietitian: _____