

Diverticulosis and Diverticulitis Action Plan

Follow the guidelines below for home care.

Diet for Diverticulitis

During flare ups of diverticulitis, follow a clear liquid diet.

A clear liquid diet means no solid foods. During the clear liquid diet, you may consume:

- Broth
- Clear juices such as apple, cranberry and grape. (Avoid orange juice)
- Jell-O
- Popsicles

When you're able to eat solid food, choose low fiber foods. This gives your bowel a chance to rest so that it can recover.

Low fiber foods include:

- Applesauce
- Canned or cooked fruit without seeds or skin, such as applesauce and melon
- Canned or well cooked vegetables without seeds and skin
- Dairy products such as cheese, milk and yogurt
- Eggs
- Low-fiber cereal
- Meat that is ground or tender and well cooked
- Pasta
- Pudding
- Yogurt
- White bread and white rice

After symptoms improve, usually within two to four days, you may add 5 to 15 grams of fiber a day back into your diet. Resume your high fiber diet when you no longer have symptoms.

Tips for recovery include:

- Gradually update your diet once the pain subsides.
- Monitor your temperature and report any rising temperature to your healthcare provider.
- Take antibiotics exactly as directed. Do not miss any and keep taking them even if you feel better.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day, unless directed otherwise. Fluid will help soften your stool.
- Use a heating pad or hot water bottle to reduce abdominal cramping or pain.

Preventing diverticulitis in the future

- Eat a high-fiber diet. Fiber adds bulk to the stool so that it passes through the large intestine more easily.
- Keep drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water every day, unless directed otherwise.
- Begin an exercise program. Exercise also promotes bowel movement and helps prevent constipation.
- Treat diarrhea with a bland diet. Start with liquids only, then slowly add fiber over time.
- Watch for changes in your bowel movements (constipation to diarrhea).
- Avoid constipation with fiber and add a stool softener if needed.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep.
- Fiber softens the stool and helps prevent constipation. It also can help decrease pressure in the colon and help prevent flare-ups of diverticulitis.
- Adding fiber gradually to your diet can help avoid bloating and abdominal discomfort. The target is to eat 25 to 30 grams of fiber daily.

High-fiber foods include:

- Beans and legumes
- Bran, whole wheat bread and whole grain cereals such as oatmeal
- Brown and wild rice
- Fruits such as apples, bananas and pears
- Vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, corn and squash
- Whole wheat pasta

Call our office immediately if you have any of the following:

- Bleeding from your rectum
- Chills
- Fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Nausea and vomiting
- Tenderness in the belly, most commonly the lower left side
- Severe cramps in the belly, most commonly the lower left side