



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Diverticulitis

Diverticulitis occurs when small, bulging pouches develop in your digestive tract and become inflamed or infected. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Colon	The part of the large intestine that extends from the cecum to the rectum.
Intestines	A long tube extending from the stomach to the colon in which food is digested, absorbed, and excreted.
Large Intestine	The lower part of the intestine in which water is removed from digested foods before it is passed out of the body as solid waste.
Small Intestine	The upper part of the intestine between the stomach and the large intestine.
Inflammation	Occurs when the body is trying to fight something that is not normal. In the case of diverticulitis, pockets in the intestine (usually the colon) can balloon outwards and become inflamed and result in a variety of symptoms.
Colitis	Inflammation of the lining of the colon.
Diverticula	Small pouches that develop in the colon. These pouches are common after age 40 and seldom cause problems. When they become inflamed or infected, a person is said to have diverticulitis.
Flare	People who have diverticulosis may develop a flare which results in diverticulitis.
Colonoscopy	A test that examines the intestines using flexible lighted tube. This test can be used to diagnose diverticulitis.
Fiber	The indigestible part of carbohydrate found in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. Fiber helps to increase transit time in the bowels and has been shown to aid in colon health. When a person is experiencing diverticulitis they must eat a lower fiber diet, but if there is no inflammation or infection, a higher fiber diet is recommended for bowel health and regularity.
Low Residue Diet	Otherwise known as a low-fiber nutrition therapy, reduces the frequency and volume of stool. This lessens irritation to the gastrointestinal tract, which can help it heal.



About Treatment (continued)

- Can I eat vegetables? What kinds and should they be cooked?
- Do I need to take medication?
- One of my friends had to have surgery due to diverticulitis, will that happen to me?

About Coping

- What is the best method of managing this disease along with other health conditions?
- Is there someone I can meet with for more education, such as a registered dietitian?
- Are there any good resources that you recommend for healthy eating? Or support groups?

About Living With Diverticulitis

- Are there certain foods I should avoid?
- Should I be following a specific meal plan?
- What about exercise? Will that help to prevent attacks?
- What types of foods are high in fiber?
- What is an example of a low fiber diet?
