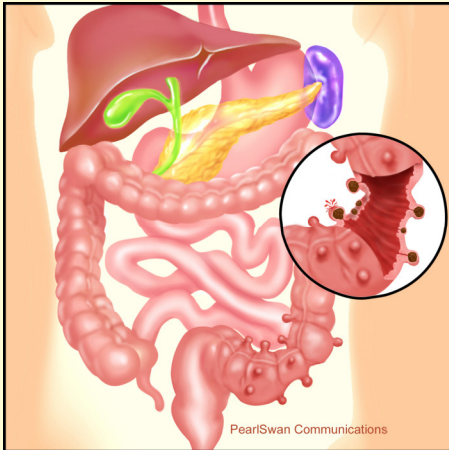


What You Should Know About Diverticulosis



WHAT IS DIVERTICULOSIS?

Diverticulosis is the formation of Diverticulum, or 'pouches' on the bowel. They grow as we age. Almost all Americans 80 years old will have formed them.

WHY DO DIVERTICULUM DEVELOP?

Diverticulosis does not form in areas of the world where high fiber diets are consumed.

They develop over years of 'increased pressure' within our large intestine. This pressure weakens the wall of the bowel, gradually pushing out 'diverticulum', or pouches. These pouches are thin, containing only part of the lining of the bowel. This leaves them more prone to 'break' or bleed.

WHAT PROBLEMS CAN DIVERTICULUM CAUSE?

The overwhelming majority of us have no problems with diverticulosis. It is mild and causes no symptoms.

There are however, 3 problems that can develop:

1. **Perforation:** The spillage of stool and bacteria into surrounding tissues creating infection. This is called **Diverticulitis**.
2. **Bleeding**
3. **Chronic abdominal pain and irregularity**

One 'attack' does not mean that you will have another.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DIVERTICULITIS?

- Fever
- Abdominal Pain: Commonly left lower quadrant
If you have symptoms of an attack, call your physician immediately for evaluation.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

- a. Physical Exam in your physician's office
- b. Blood testing may be done
- c. C.T. scan may be ordered

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Initial treatment depends on severity of disease:

- Home antibiotics and liquid diet
- Hospital antibiotics and bowel rest
- Emergency Surgery

Over the long term, recurrent diverticular disease is minimized by taking daily fiber supplements.

Metamucil Pill / Powder / Cookie _____

Sugar-free/ Regular

One Teaspoon/ Tablespoon with 8-12 oz. of water

Once a day Twice a Day

It is important to keep the bowel movement easy, don't push, strain or struggle.

Seeds, nuts and popcorn are no longer thought to cause diverticulosis, or diverticulitis.

WHAT ARE THE INDICATIONS FOR SURGERY?

- a. Emergency Surgery:
 - Severe infection, unresponsive to antibiotics
 - Heavy bleeding, that will not stop
- b. Elective Surgery is considered when:
 - Single 'complicated' attack
 - Recurrent attacks, requiring hospitalizations
 - Persistent, 'festering' documented disease

Safety tips:

1. Develop an easy, effortless bowel movement.
2. Call your family doctor, or Dr. Pearlman/Dr. Damadi immediately if symptom recur.
3. Follow-up:

Colonoscopy in _____ wks Office Visit in _____ wks If symptoms recur