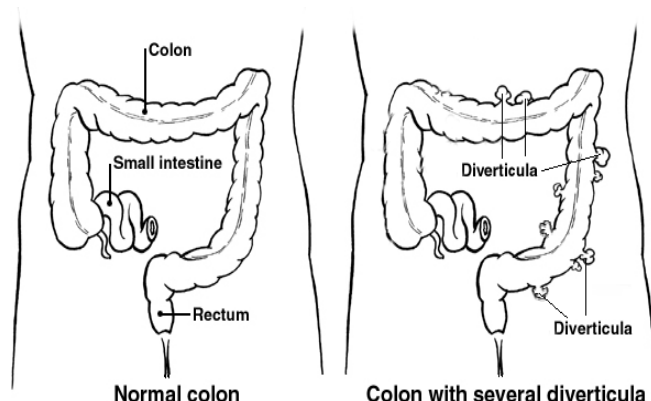


# Dietary Advice for Diverticular Disease

## What is diverticular disease?

Diverticulum is a Latin term meaning pouch. The pouches can protrude outwards into the large intestine (colon). This is called diverticular disease.



## Definitions:

**Diverticulum:** Small pouch in the large intestine (colon).

**Diverticula:** More than one small pouch in the large intestine.

**Diverticulosis:** Having diverticula with **no** symptoms.

**Diverticular disease:** Having diverticula **with** symptoms.

**Diverticulitis:** Having diverticula which become swollen (inflamed) or infected.

## Diet and Diverticular Disease

If you have diverticular disease it is important to eat a high fibre diet. Dietary fibre works like a sponge in the digestive system.

It absorbs water and makes your faeces (stools) softer.

Gradually increasing the amount of fibre in your diet may relieve symptoms by helping to keep stools soft, bulky and regular.

It may take 2-3 weeks for your body to adapt to the increased fibre in your diet.

You may notice increased wind or bloating at first, however this is normal and should soon settle.

## What is Fibre?

Sometimes called “roughage”, fibre is the part of food that passes through the body undigested.

It is found naturally in fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereals, legumes and pulses. There are two main types of fibre: soluble and insoluble.

It is important to include both types in your diet. Good sources of each type of fibre include:

**Soluble fibre:** Oats, fruit and vegetables, legumes and pulses.

**Insoluble fibre:** Wholegrain cereals and foods containing them.

## How can I increase my fibre intake?

You can increase the amount of fibre in your diet by eating five portions of fruit and vegetables every day and choosing wholegrain products (see table overleaf).

<b>Bread and flour</b>	Wholemeal bread, granary bread, rye bread, wholemeal crackers
<b>Cereals</b>	Porridge oats, Branflakes, Shreddies, Weetabix, Shredded wheat
<b>Pasta and rice</b>	Wholemeal pasta and brown rice
<b>Fruit</b>	All varieties; fresh, dried, frozen and tinned
<b>Vegetables</b>	All varieties including fresh, frozen and tinned
<b>Pulses</b>	Chickpeas, split peas, beans and lentils

## How much fluid should I have?

It is essential that when you increase the fibre in your diet, you drink more fluid (more than eight cups of non-alcoholic drinks per day).

## Meal Ideas

### Breakfast

- Wholemeal toast with low fat spread and jam
- Porridge/wholegrain cereal with milk and fresh or dried fruit
- Fruit smoothie

### Light meal

- Wholemeal bread sandwich with salad and meat/fish/cheese
- Jacket potato with baked beans and salad

### Main meal

- Wholemeal pasta with sauce, meat/pulses and vegetables

- Curry with brown rice, vegetables and pulses

## What is diverticulitis?

Diverticulitis occurs when the pouches (diverticula) in your colon become swollen (inflamed) or infected.

You may have the following symptoms and, if so, should contact your GP:

- constant, severe abdominal pain
- fever (high temperature)
- nausea/vomiting
- constipation
- bleeding from the back passage (rectum)

You may be advised to follow a low residue diet if you have diverticulitis.

## How to follow a low residue diet

A low residue diet may help to reduce pain and swelling (inflammation).

You should choose foods that are low in fibre and avoid foods that are hard to digest e.g. nuts, seeds pips and skins.

Caffeine, alcohol and spices may irritate the diverticula and might also be best avoided.

When your symptoms have gone away you can gradually re-introduce the high fibre foods over a two to three weeks period.

It is important not to continue a low fibre diet for longer than necessary, as it does not have all of the essential vitamins and mineral you need for a healthy diet.

## Probiotics

Some research has suggested that using probiotics ('good' or 'friendly' bacteria) such as Yakult, Actimel, VSL #3, could reduce symptoms of diverticular disease and may prevent the chance of developing diverticulitis.

If you choose to take a probiotic, then use one brand at a time and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

## The Low residue diet

	<b>Foods allowed</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<b>Meat &amp; fish</b>	All kinds of tender fish, meat and meat products. Meat alternatives e.g. Tofu, Quorn	Skin and bones of fish. Gristle, tough cuts of meat Pies, curries or stews containing the vegetables listed below
<b>Fruit</b>	Ripe, soft fruit Tinned or stewed fruit	Tough skins. seeds and pips Citrus fruit pith e.g. orange, grapefruit Dried fruit Pineapple core
<b>Vegetables</b>	Soft, well-cooked vegetables with skins removed e.g. carrot, turnip, butternut squash, swede Potatoes (without skins) Crisps	Baked beans Split peas and lentils Potato skins Tough vegetable stalks Peas, sprouts, cabbage Sweet corn Seeds and pips Raw salad vegetables such as tomato or celery or pepper
<b>Dairy foods</b>	All kinds of milk Smooth yoghurts Plain cheese	Yoghurts containing fruit or nut pieces Cheese containing fruit pieces
<b>Fats</b>	Butter Margarine Cooking Oils	None
<b>Nuts</b>	None	All nuts Peanut butter Coconut Marzipan

## Further information:

If you are worried that you are losing weight or if you feel that you need more dietary advice, please contact the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics on 0151 525 5980 and we will be happy to advise you further.

You may find additional information on the following websites:

- **CORE - Advice and information on digestive disorders**

**Tel: 020 7486 0341**

**[www.corecharity.org.uk](http://www.corecharity.org.uk)**

- **[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**



### **If you require a special edition of this leaflet**

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

**Tel No: 0151 529 2906**

**Email: [interpretationandtranslation@aintree.nhs.uk](mailto:interpretationandtranslation@aintree.nhs.uk)**