



Hard nuts and seeds can block or scratch diverticular leading to diverticulitis

Diverticular disease is a medical condition where 'diverticular' (small pouches in the bowel wall) are present in the colon. Diverticular are thought to be formed due to build up of pressure in the bowel and can be hollow, fluid-filled or may become filled with waste products. Chronic constipation is the most common cause of this pressure as smooth muscle contractions of the bowels are unable to pass stools. Diverticular are more common in the sigmoid colon (the later part of our bowel) due to the increased pressure.

People with diverticular disease may have few or no symptoms if the diverticular are hollow or fluid-filled however, if stools in diverticular become infected (diverticulitis), bowel function may be affected. Symptoms experienced depend on the level of infection but can include:

- abdominal pain,
- constipation or diarrhoea,
- nausea and vomiting,
- distension (bloating) of the lower abdomen,
- fever, and/or
- minor bleeding.

Management of Diverticular Disease

Day-to-day management of your diverticular disease comes down to you having good bowel health and minimising the pressure caused by constipation on your large bowel. The three key factors that impact bowel health are fluid, fibre and physical activity, therefore it is important you:

- drink plenty of fluids to ensure bowel actions are moist and easy to pass,
- maintain a high fibre diet to help form soft and easy to pass stools, and
- participate in regular physical activity to assist gut function and stool movement.

Modifying fibre your diet

Generally, for normal bowel health we need a combination of soluble and insoluble fibre to add in moisture and provide structure for your stools. The amount and type of fibre in your diet can have a big impact on your bowel health thus preventing the formation of further diverticula.

Modifying the quantity and types of fibre in your diet can help to prevent inflammation which can lead to diverticulitis and it can also help manage symptoms during active flare-up periods. Talk to your Dietitian about the types of fibre you need and where to get it from in your diet to help manage your Diverticular Disease.



Consider a fibre supplement if you struggle with your fibre intake



Your Dietitian can help you develop a meal plan with appropriate levels of fibre in your diet

Quick quiz

Have a look at the list of food items below. Which of them are rich in soluble fibre and which are rich in insoluble fibre?

- Cabbage
- Pasta
- Prunes
- Nuts
- Banana

Where to get extra help

It doesn't matter if you've recently been diagnosed or if you've had Diverticular Disease for years, it is important to have regular reviews with your dietitian. Your Dietitian can help manage your symptoms, help to prevent further complications and give you tips to ensure that you are feeling your best. For more information and to make an appointment with an experienced Dietitian call us on 1300 438 550 or visit www.melaniemcgrice.com.au



Fluid and exercise will help improve your overall bowel health