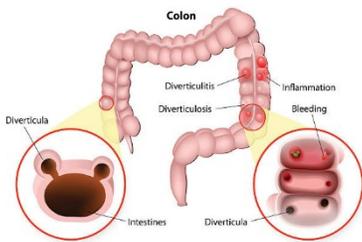


Diverticulosis and Diverticulitis

Diverticulitis

DIVERTICULOSIS and DIVERTICULITIS

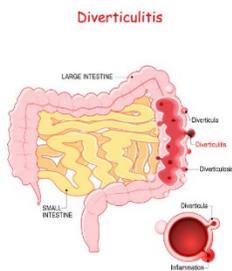


It is a disease in which small sacs (diverticulum) protrude and droop out into the wall of the intestine. Diverticula can occur in the esophagus, stomach, and small intestine, but most often form in the colon (large intestine). This is common from the age of 40 and can take years to form. Usually do not cause symptoms and in some cases can cause health complications.

What is the cause?

Diverticula (small protuberant bags) form when there is increased the pressure within the colon as a result of constipation, straining during bowel movements, or delayed bowel movements. Constipation and pressure within the colon are usually caused by insufficient fiber in the diet. In addition, there is the possibility of suffering from the disease due to genetic factors, which means that it could be develop if a close relative has had diverticulosis.

Diverticulitis: Infection of the sacs



Most people do not have symptoms of diverticulosis until diverticulitis develops, which is when the diverticula become inflamed (swelling), or an infection in one or more diverticula occurs. An exact cause for the infection is not known, but it is possible that it occurs when fecal matter gets stuck in the small sacs. This infection can cause complications such as inflammation or rupture of the diverticula. Symptoms generally include pain, fever, nausea, vomiting, and chills. The rupture of an infected diverticulum can cause severe infection in the abdominal cavity, known as peritonitis.



What happens if these conditions are not treated?

In rare cases, an infected diverticula can tear open, spilling intestinal waste into the abdominal cavity. This is a medical emergency and requires immediate attention. Other complications may include blockages in the intestine, an abscess (infection), or a fistula (an abnormal connection between two organs). If the fistula becomes infected, it can be fatal.

Some factors that can increase the risk of diverticulitis:

	Aging		Lack of exercise
	Obesity		Diet high in animal fat and low in fiber
	Smoke		Medicine (steroids, opiates and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug)

How can the condition be controlled?

Diverticulosis: Once diverticula form in the colon, this do not go away. To prevent the condition from worsening and the formation of more diverticula (tiny sacs), it is recommended to eat high-fiber foods and increase your water intake.

Diverticulitis: It is important to know how to identify the symptoms because, if not treated in time, the infected diverticulum can rupture, spilling fecal matter into the abdominal cavity.

Recommendations to keep your colon healthy

Increase fiber intake in your diet: It helps keep stool soft and decreases pressure in the colon.

Drink a lot of liquid: The fiber is activated by absorbing water, which causes the stool to be abundant and soft. If you don't drink enough fluids, but you do eat a lot of fiber, it can make you constipated.

Go to the bathroom as soon as you need it: Delaying defecation will cause the fecal material to harden, requiring more pressure.

Doing physical activity: Doing physical activity or exercise helps improve bowel function.

Prepared by Certified Health Educators.
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Remember

It is important to visit your doctor and depending on the severity of the symptoms, the doctor will recommend the treatment modality and strategies measures that may begin with changes in the diet, medications, hospitalization and/or surgery.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For tips, tools, and resources on how you and your family can manage any emotional and physical concerns that may occur during and after your medical treatment, please visit your primary doctor or contact the following phone lines:

First Health Call

1-866-337-3338

TTY/TDD: 1-866-921-0101

APS Healthcare 787- 641-9133

Referencias:

(2022) <https://gi.org/patients/recursos-en-espanol/diverticulosis-del-colon/>

(2022) <https://www.mayoclinic.org/es-es/diseases-conditions/diverticulitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20371758>