

### 3.13 Digestive health - Diverticular disease

Meryl, 65, has just has a colonoscopy to investigate rectal bleeding.

Meryl: That wasn't nearly as bad as I thought it would be. What did they find doctor?

Provide: You have a problem called diverticular disease. It's very common as we get older. It happens if we don't eat enough fibre and the bowel has to work hard to squeeze faeces along. The wall of the bowel develops weak points which bulge and balloon out making small pouches called diverticulae.

Elicit: Are your with me so far?

Provide: Often these diverticulae cause no problem, but sometimes they become inflamed causing pain, bleeding or a fever. If you get mild pain taking paracetamol is sensible, but we should see you urgently with more severe pain. If your bowel habit changes, or you get persistent bleeding again, please come back, so that we can make sure that it isn't something more serious.