

# Discharge Instructions for Diverticulitis



You have been diagnosed with diverticulitis. This is a condition in which small pouches form in your colon (large intestine) and become inflamed or infected. Follow the guidelines below for home care.

## As you recover

Tips for recovery include:

- Eat a low-fiber diet at first while you recover. Your healthcare provider may advise a liquid diet. This gives your bowel a chance to rest so that it can recover.
- Include these foods: flake cereal, mashed potatoes, pancakes, waffles, pasta, white bread, rice, applesauce, bananas, eggs, fish, poultry, tofu, and well-cooked vegetables.
- Take your medicines as directed. Don't stop taking the medicines, even if you feel better.
- Monitor your temperature and report any rise in temperature to your healthcare provider.
- Take any prescribed antibiotics exactly as directed. Don't miss any and keep taking them even if you feel better.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day, unless told otherwise.
- Use a heating pad or hot water bottle to reduce abdominal cramping or pain.

## Preventing diverticulitis in the future

Tips for prevention include:

- Eat a high-fiber diet. Fiber adds bulk to the stool so that it passes through the large intestine more easily.
- Keep drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water every day, unless told otherwise.
- Start an exercise program. Ask your healthcare provider how to get started. You can benefit from simple activities such as walking or gardening.
- Treat diarrhea with a bland diet. Start with liquids only, then slowly add fiber over time.
- Watch for changes in your bowel movements (constipation to diarrhea).
- Prevent constipation with fiber and add a stool softener if needed.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep.
- If possible, don't take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen. They increase the risk of diverticulitis.

## Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment, or as advised. You may need a colonoscopy or other imaging test of your colon.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher, or as advised by your provider
- Chills
- Severe cramps in your belly, most often the lower left side
- Soreness in your belly, most often the lower left side
- Nausea and vomiting
- Bleeding from your rectum

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