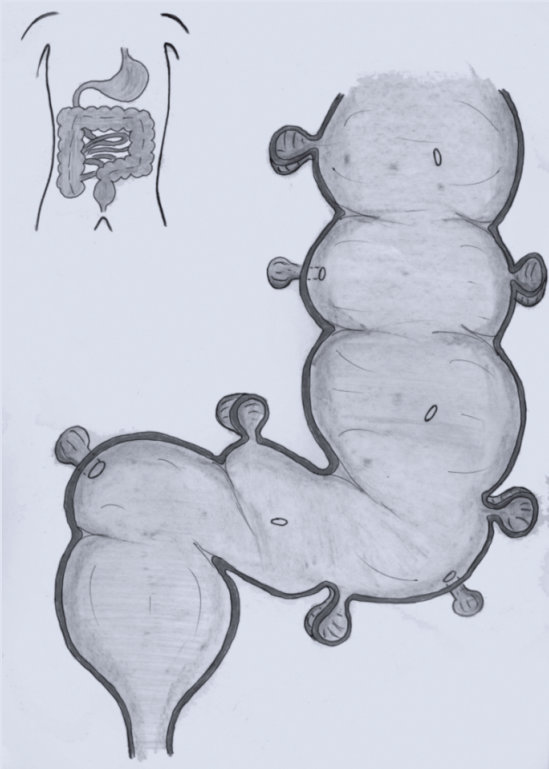


## What is Diverticular disease?

Diverticular disease is a condition in which there are small pouches in the wall of the bowel. If one of these becomes inflamed, it is called diverticulitis.

## What causes Diverticular disease?



Diverticular disease is thought to be caused by high pressure in the bowel. This is similar to a bulge in the bicycle tyre from increased pressure. A lack of a high fibre diet is thought to increase pressure in the bowel wall.

Diverticular disease is very common condition with about 50% of population being affected by the age of 50. Approximately 75% of people affected from this condition will not experience any symptoms.

## Is it a cancer?

The simple answer is **“NO”** it is not type of cancer. There is no connection between diverticular disease and cancer.

## How can I prevent this disease?

Eating a high-fibre diet, may help prevent diverticular disease, and may help to improve your symptoms. Your diet should be balanced, and include at least five daily portions of fruit and vegetable, most of which have good fibre content. Brown rice, wholemeal bread and bran or oat-based cereals contribute to the fibre in your diet.

## What are the symptoms?

Diverticular disease can cause episodes of pain in your lower abdomen, usually on the left side. The pain may be brought on by eating, while passing stools (faeces), and passing wind may help to relieve pain. It can also cause constipation or diarrhoea and bleeding in your stools.

Diverticulitis can cause severe constant pain, which usually starts below your belly button, before moving to the lower left-hand side of your abdomen, fever, frequent need to urinate, pain when you urinate, nausea, vomiting, constipation and bleeding in your stools.

## How are patients assessed for diverticular disease?

The doctor will ask you about your symptoms and examine your abdomen, including your backpassage. It is often necessary to do tests to look at the bowel to diagnose diverticular disease and to exclude bowel cancer since that can have similar symptoms. These tests may include examining your bowel with a flexible camera (Flexible sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy – see separate leaflets) or using a CT scan.

## How is diverticular disease treated?

Most cases of diverticular disease can be treated with simple painkiller like paracetamol. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), such as aspirin, or ibuprofen, are not recommended as they may ncrease the risk of internal bleeding. If you are experiencing symptoms of

constipation, you may be given a laxative. It is important to drink plenty of fluids. If you get severe constant pain in the abdomen or persistent or heavy bleeding with your stools, you should contact your doctor straight away since you may have diverticulitis.

**Diverticulitis:** If you are not very unwell your GP will prescribe antibiotics for the infection, and some painkillers. You may require admission to hospital if your pain cannot be controlled using paracetamol, you are unable to drink enough fluids to keep you hydrated, you are unable to take oral antibiotics, your general state of health is poor or your GP suspects complications. If you are admitted to hospital for treatment, it is likely that you will receive injections of antibiotics. Most people usually start to improve within 2-3 days. Sometimes diverticulitis causes an abscess inside your abdomen. This may need draining with a tube or may need a surgery.

## What does the surgery involve?

In those that need to have surgery for their diverticular disease then the surgeon will remove the section of the bowel causing problems. If suitable then the two ends of the bowel are joined back together. In some cases of more complex disease for example if the bowel has burst inside the abdomen it may be necessary to give the patient a temporary stoma or bag. If this is the case the surgeon will discuss this possibility with you before the operation and explain how this can be managed.

## Department of Surgery

### Diverticular Disease (diverticulosis/diverticulitis)

