

# Suspected diverticulitis



Hôpital général juif  
Jewish General Hospital

## What are diverticulosis and diverticulitis?

Diverticulosis happens when small, bulging pouches, called diverticula, form due to pressure in your colon (large intestine).

Diverticulitis occurs when the diverticula gets inflamed and or infected. It usually causes a pain and tenderness in the left lower part of your abdomen. The diagnosis and the severity of diverticulitis is based on the result of a CT scan, a series of blood tests and a clinical examination.

## Possible tests

The tests are to investigate and identify the cause of your pain.

- Blood test: check for any signs of infection and/or inflammation.
- Colonoscopy: insertion of a miniature camera at the tip of a long flexible tube into the rectum to check the walls of the colon to better see the inflamed and/or infected diverticula.
- Abdominal-pelvic CT scan: confirmation of the diagnosis of diverticulitis and its severity. The CT scan machine will circle the body and take detailed pictures of the inside of your abdomen and pelvis. Detailed three-dimensional (3D) images of the organs are created by computer.

## Signs and symptoms

- Severe pain in the belly (left lower part of your belly)
- Fever
- Nausea
- Constipation or diarrhea

## Risk factors for diverticulitis

- Aging
- Smoking
- Obesity and lack of exercise
- Diet high in animal fat and low fiber
- Certain medications
- Genes



## What should you do during this crisis?

- Follow the diet that was suggested to you if your results showed uncomplicated diverticulitis.
- Choose a liquid diet for about three days while your bowel heals and a low-fibre diet if the pain is improving after three days of the liquid diet (refer to diet pamphlet for details).
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine and rest
- Take pain medication as prescribed by your doctor or NP if you have pain. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®), if your doctor or NP did not prescribe a pain medication and contact your local pharmacist for information about taking pain medication.

## Go to the Emergency Department if you have these symptoms:

- Fever over 38°C (oral)
- Vomiting and unable to tolerate oral fluids
- Altered level of consciousness
- Pain that is not controlled with pain medications

*This information should not be used in place of a visit with a health professional.*

## How to prevent another diverticulitis crisis?

- Exercise regularly for 30 minutes a day to promote normal bowel function and decrease the pressure inside the colon.
- Eat more fiber to softens your stool so it can pass quickly and easily through the colon. Reducing constipation helps decrease pressure in the colon.
- Drink two or three liters of fluids, if your health condition allows it.
- Quit smoking.

## Your appointments

- Arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled time.
- Phone the Clinical Access Service, if you cannot come to your appointment.

A clinical nutritionist will contact you 72 hours after your appointment. The Clinical Access Service nurse will ensure a phone follow-up one week after your first visit. If needed, she/he will refer you to a colorectal surgeon based on specific criteria.

# Information

If you have questions, you can contact :

- The nurse at the Clinical Access Service, from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at 514-340-8222, ext. 22324
- Info-Santé 811 (24/7)
- Your local pharmacist for questions about medication or your family doctor or NP for your tests and consultations.

### Jewish General Hospital

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