REFLUX & SWALLOWING CENTER

DR. ALI ZAD
Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist
MD, FRACP

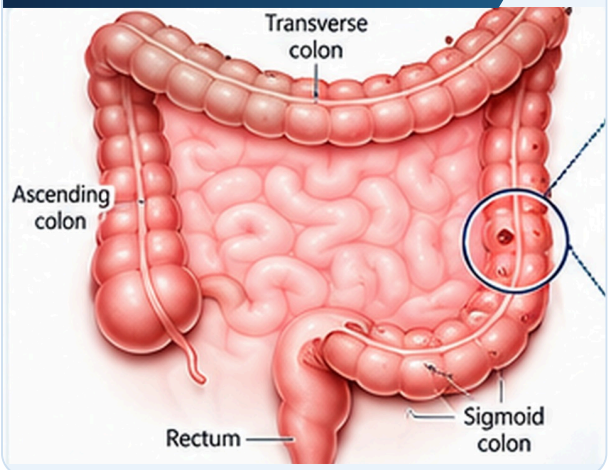
Diverticular Disease

A common condition of the large bowel (colon)

Diverticular disease occurs when small pouches (diverticula) form in the wall of the colon. It is very common, especially as we get older, and usually causes no problems.

Most people with diverticulosis live normal, healthy lives with simple lifestyle measures.

What is diverticular disease?



Normal colon (inside view)



Diverticulosis (small pouches)



How common is it?

Very common, especially after the age of 50



>50% of people over 60 have diverticula



Most people never have symptoms

Why do diverticula form?

- Increased pressure inside the colon
- Low-fibre diet (particularly in the past)
- Ageing (weaker bowel wall)
- Family history (in some people)

What are the symptoms?



Often no symptoms



Bloating and wind



Change in bowel habit



Mild tummy pain (usually lower left)

Important:

Having diverticulosis **does NOT** mean you have cancer and does not increase your risk of bowel cancer.

A high-fibre diet can help keep your bowel healthy

Good sources of fibre



Fruits & vegetables



Whole grains (oats, brown rice)



Legumes (lentils, chickpeas)



Nuts and seeds

Other healthy habits



Drink plenty of water



Regular physical activity



Maintain a healthy weight

You do NOT need to avoid nuts, seeds, popcorn or high-fibre foods.
Current evidence shows these do not increase the risk of diverticulitis.

REFLUX & SWALLOWING CENTER

DR. ALI ZAD
Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist
MD, FRACP

Diverticulitis



When a diverticulum becomes inflamed

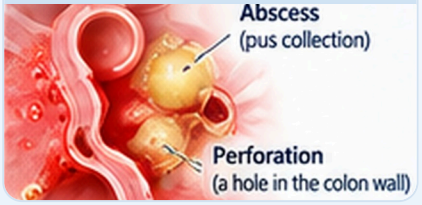
Diverticulitis occurs when one or more diverticula become inflamed or infected. It can cause significant pain and needs medical assessment.

How does diverticulitis look?

Uncomplicated diverticulitis
(inflammation)



Complicated diverticulitis
(abscess, perforation, blockage)



Symptoms of diverticulitis

- Constant pain in the lower left side of the abdomen
- Fever and feeling unwell
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Change in bowel habit (constipation or diarrhoea)

Treatment of diverticulitis

Mild uncomplicated
(most cases)

Usually treated at home with:

- Rest, clear fluids, then normal diet
- Pain relief (paracetamol)
- Antibiotics only if needed

Complicated
(less common)

May require:

- Hospital and IV antibiotics
- Drainage or, rarely, surgery
- Colonoscopy 6 to 8 weeks later

Complications (rare)

- Abscess (pus collection)
- Perforation (hole in the colon)
- Blockage of the bowel
- Fistula (abnormal connection)
- Recurrent diverticulitis

Preventing future problems

- High-fibre diet
- Drink water
- Regular exercise
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Avoid smoking
- Avoid regular NSAID painkillers (e.g. ibuprofen) if possible

Seek urgent medical attention if you have:

- Severe or worsening abdominal pain
- High fever (over 38°C)
- Repeated vomiting
- Inability to pass stools or wind
- Rectal bleeding

Your personalised advice

Sources: AGA Clinical Practice Update on Medical Management of Colonic Diverticulitis (2021); ASCRS Clinical Practice Guidelines for Left-sided Colonic Diverticulitis (2020). Reviewed by Dr Ali Zad, November 2026. General educational information only, not a substitute for personal medical advice.

CONSULTING AT

Brisbane Private — Brisbane City
Caboolture Private — Caboolture
North West Private — Everton Park
North Lakes Day — North Lakes
Peninsula Private — Kippa-Ring
St Andrew's — Spring Hill
Westside Private — Taringa

REFLUX & SWALLOWING CENTER — DR. ALI ZAD

(07) 2111 2600 | Fax (07) 3521 5947 | refluxandswallowingcenter.com.au
Referrals welcome · You can book directly; a GP referral is needed for a Medicare rebate