

Diverticulitis Diet

A diverticulitis diet is something your doctor might recommend as part of a treatment plan for diverticulitis. A diverticulitis diet can not treat or prevent diverticulitis; it is intended to give your digestive system a chance to rest.

Diverticulitis occurs when small, bulging pouches (diverticula) in your digestive tract become infected and inflamed. Mild cases are usually treated with antibiotics and a diverticulitis diet, which include clear liquids and low-fiber foods. More severe cases typically require hospitalization.

A diverticulitis diet starts with only clear liquids for a few days. Examples of beverages allowed for clear liquids include:

- Broth
- Clear soda
- Fruit juices without pulp, such as apple or grape juice
- Ice chips
- Ice pops without bits of fruit or fruit pulp
- Plain gelatin (Jell-O)
- Plain water
- Tea or coffee without cream

As you start feeling better, your doctor will recommend that you slowly add low-fiber foods. Examples of low-fiber foods include:

- Canned or cooked fruits without skin or seeds
- Canned or cooked vegetables such as green beans, peas and potatoes (without the skin)
- Eggs, fish and poultry
- Refined wheat and white bread
- Fruit juice with little or no pulp
- Low-fiber cereals
- Milk, low-fat yogurt and cheese
- White rice, pasta and noodles

You should feel better within two or three days of starting the diet and antibiotics. If you are not feeling better by then, contact your doctor. You should also contact your doctor if:

- You develop a fever
- Your abdominal pain is worsening
- You are unable to keep clear liquids down

These may indicate a complication that requires hospitalization.

Risks

The diverticulitis diet has few risks. However, continuing a clear liquid diet for more than a few days can lead to weakness and other complications, since it does not provide enough of the nutrients your body needs. For this reason, your doctor will want you to transition back to a normal diet as soon as you can tolerate it. Be sure to increase the fiber in your diet slowly and aim for the recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans – at least 21 grams of fiber a day for women and 30 for men.

Your physician is the best source of information for questions and concerns related to your medical problem. No two patients are exactly alike and recommendations vary from one person to another. It is important to seek guidance from a physician who is familiar with your individual situation and takes into account your health status and lifestyle.