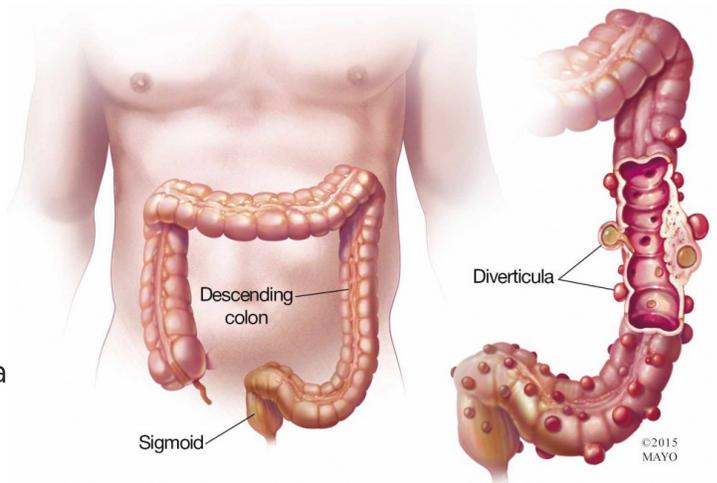


# Diverticulosis

**Diverticulosis** is a condition where there are outpouchings in weak areas of the colon. They are similar to blebs in a balloon or an inner tube. They are unrelated to polyps or cancer. One bleb is referred to as a **diverticulum** and if there are more than one, they are referred to as **diverticula**. Most occur in the left colon, particularly the sigmoid colon.

**Diverticulitis** is where one or more diverticula become inflamed or infected. This generally presents with mild to moderate pain located in the lower left abdomen. It may, or may not, be accompanied by loose stools, blood in the stool, fever, nausea, and not feeling well. Most cases can be treated successfully with oral antibiotics. Albeit less frequent, more severe complications can occur such as perforation with a localized abscess, free perforation into the abdominal cavity, or development of an abnormal tract (known as a fistula) between the colon and bladder, vagina, or other portions of the intestinal tract. These conditions frequently require surgical treatment, sometimes on an emergency basis.

Diverticulosis is thought to be the result of increased pressure inside the colon (especially the sigmoid colon), resulting in bulging of weak areas of the colon wall. This pressure may be a result of frequent constipation. This is thought to be the result of not enough fiber in a person's diet. Additionally, older age may be a risk factor in developing diverticulosis



## Treatment:

Once diverticulosis is present, it will not go away. The general recommendation is to increase the fiber in one's diet. The best sources of fiber are the natural sources such as fruits and vegetables. Blending your fiber into smoothies breaks up the fiber so that it is less effective. Additional sources of fiber include fiber supplements such as Metamucil™, Benefiber™, or Citrucel™, or any store brand of fiber (generally much cheaper than the name brands), or fiber pills.

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