

# Diverticulitis

Diverticulitis is an infection of small pouches or sacs in the muscle wall of the large intestine, also called the colon. Stool or food can get caught in these sacs causing an infection. This infection can cause swelling or pain. You can get very sick with diverticulitis.

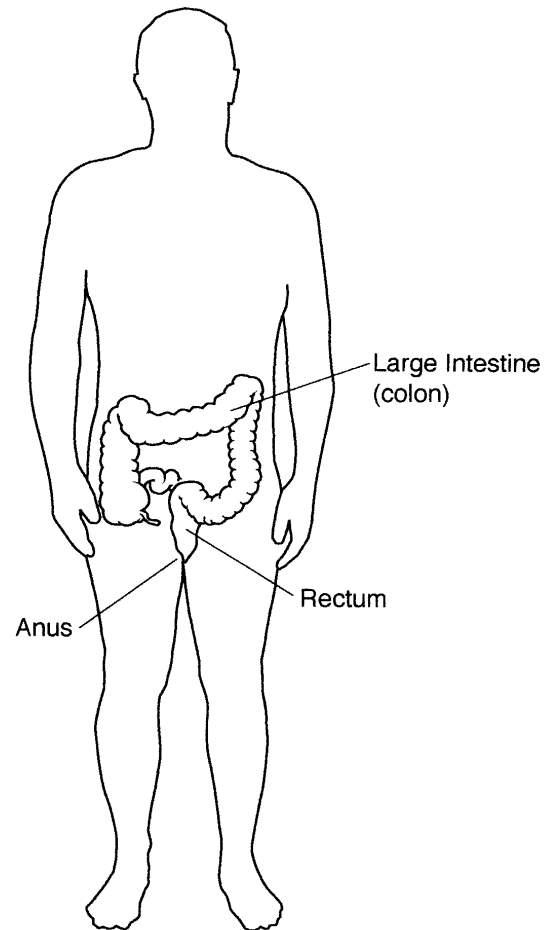
## Signs

- Pain and cramping often on the lower left side of your abdomen
- Fever and chills
- Nausea and vomiting
- Hard bowel movements called constipation

## Your Care

Testing such as a CT scan or a blood test may be done to plan your care. For your care, you may need to:

- Rest and eat only liquids for several days.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water each day.
- Take medicines.
- Take a stool softener.
- Go to the toilet when you have the urge to have a bowel movement.
- Exercise each day.
- Eat more high fiber foods such as wheat bran, whole grain breads and cereals, legumes, nuts and fresh fruits and vegetables. **Slowly** increase the amount of high fiber foods you eat.
- Eat at set times throughout the day.
- Lose weight if you need to.
- Quit tobacco use.
- Reduce stress.
- Stay at a hospital if you have a bad infection.
- Have surgery to remove the damaged part of the colon if you have diverticulitis often.



Call your doctor **right away** if you have:

- A bad pain in your abdomen that does not go away or gets worse.
- Trouble breathing all of a sudden.
- A fever higher than 101 degrees F or 38 degrees C.
- Chills or feel weak and achy.
- Bowel movements that are black or have blood in them.
- Not had a bowel movement for 3 days.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**