



Diverticulitis: Symptoms, Causes & Treatment

Below, Dr. Nunoo discusses some of the common questions, symptoms and treatment of diverticulitis.

What is diverticulitis and what causes it?

Diverticulosis are pockets that form on the colon. Although these pockets occur throughout the whole colon they are most commonly found in the section of the colon known as the sigmoid.

The likely reason that diverticulosis develops is due to a lack of dietary fiber. When these pockets become infected, diverticulitis results.

The incidence of diverticulosis increases with age. The older you are the more likely you are to develop diverticulosis which can then lead to diverticulitis.

What are the symptoms of diverticulitis?

The most common symptoms of [diverticulitis](#) are left lower quadrant pain in the abdomen, fever, chills, constipation and occasional rectal bleeding. Diverticulitis is usually diagnosed clinically but, in severe cases, a CT scan will be needed to exclude complications. Diverticulosis is usually diagnosed via colonoscopy.

When should you see a doctor & what kind of doctor should you see?

You should see your primary care physician when you develop mild to moderate symptoms as outlined in the previous paragraph. If your symptoms are severe, you should head to the nearest emergency room where you will likely be seen by a general surgeon or a colorectal surgeon.



How is diverticulitis treated?

[Diverticulitis](#) is treated with antibiotics. In complicated cases characterized by the occurrence of abscesses, these will have to be drained. There is a 30 % risk of recurrence over 5 years. We recommend surgery for patients who have had complicated attacks or those who have frequent episodes affecting their work or life style.

At WakeMed we offer 2 options for surgery: laparoscopic and robot assisted surgery for the appropriate patients. Most of our patients stay in the hospital for 3 to 5 days.

What are some myths and misconceptions about diverticulitis?

Some of the most frequently asked questions concerning the causes of diverticulitis are, “Is it more common in the summer?”, “Do nuts, seeds and popcorn cause diverticulitis?”

So far, studies have not confirmed these myths.

There are no dietary restrictions when you have a diverticulitis.

However, if you find that a particular food makes your diverticulitis worse, you would do well to avoid it.

About Robert Nunoo, MD

[Dr. Robert Nunoo](#) is a fellowship trained colon and rectal surgeon and general surgeon, specializing in laparoscopic and robotic techniques. His clinical interest include: colon and rectal cancer, colon polyps, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, diverticulitis, and a myriad of anorectal diseases, including pilonidal cysts, hemorrhoids, fissures and fistulae.

[Schedule an appointment with Dr. Nunoo today.](#)