

## **FAQs on Diverticular Disease**

### **Q: What is diverticular disease?**

**A:** It includes many conditions that all begin when a part of the colon muscle herniates through the intestinal wall, forming a pouch. This can occur anywhere in the intestine but happens most often in the sigmoid colon, the “s”-shaped part of the colon.

The pouches are known as diverticula, and the condition is called diverticulosis. Since the pouch is open to the stream of waste after the body absorbs nutrients from the foods we eat, it can become inflamed and infected, a condition called diverticulitis.

### **Q: How did I get diverticular disease?**

**A:** Scientists aren't sure, but they've found several risk factors for developing diverticular disease, including aging, genetics, obesity, and especially carrying extra weight around the waist. You can't do anything about your family history or age, but achieving and maintaining a healthy weight may be helpful.

### **Q: Should I eat more fiber if I've been diagnosed with diverticular disease?**

**A:** Once your doctor diagnoses diverticular disease, a high-fiber diet may be beneficial to prevent further diverticulitis attacks and disease complications. However, if you've had an attack, you need to follow a low-fiber diet for a short time after until your colon recovers. After that, you should switch to a high-fiber diet. Check with your health care team for further direction.

### **Q: How do I find foods high in fiber?**

**A:** Foods high in fiber include many vegetables and fruits, peas and beans (legumes), nuts, popcorn, and whole grain breads and cereals. Meats, dairy products, and most snack and dessert foods are low in fiber. Fiber is listed on food labels, so become a label reader.