



Diverticulitis diet

By Mayo Clinic staff

Original Article: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/diverticulitis-diet/MY00736>

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Definition

A diverticulitis diet is something your doctor might recommend as part of a treatment plan for a mild case of acute diverticulitis.

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 includes clear liquids and low-fiber foods. More-severe cases typically require hospitalization.

Purpose

A diverticulitis diet can't treat or prevent diverticulitis. Rather, it's intended to give your digestive system a chance to rest. A diverticulitis diet is typically recommended along with antibiotics for mild or uncomplicated cases of diverticulitis.

Diet details

A diverticulitis diet starts with only clear liquids for a few days. Examples of beverages allowed on a clear liquid diet 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
- 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

Results

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

- You develop a fever
- Your abdominal pain is worsening
- You're 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 doesn't 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. Your

doctor may even recommend switching to a high-fiber diet to help prevent diverticulitis from recurring. Just be sure to increase the fiber in your diet slowly and aim for the level recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans — at least 25 grams of fiber a day for women and 38 grams for men.

References

July 23, 2011

MY00736

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