

# LOW FIBRE DIET FOR DIVERTICULITIS

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## What is Diverticular Disease?

As we age, the muscles in our gastrointestinal tract (gut) get weaker and lose tone. Under certain circumstances this can result in small pouches (diverticulae) to pop out in the large intestine.

*Diverticulitis* can occur when faecal matter gets caught in these pouches causing infection and inflammation. Only about a quarter of people with diverticular disease develop symptoms.

## Signs & Symptoms of Diverticulitis

Sharp abdominal pain and discomfort, bloating, fever and chills, excessive wind, blood in stool, constipation and diarrhoea.

## What do I eat during Acute Diverticulitis?

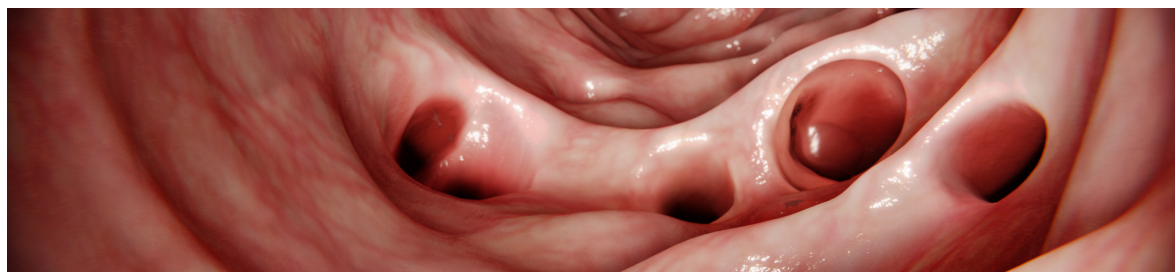
A diet low in fermentable fibre until the pain and discomfort settles. This will reduce irritation to the bowel and should only be followed for a short period of time until the bowel recovers.

## What is Fibre?

Fibre is the part of food we are unable to digest in the small intestine and moves through to the large intestine to add bulk to stool, absorb liquid and for the bacteria to ferment. An adequate fibre diet is good to keep bowels healthy. However, when someone has a bout of diverticulitis, the bowel needs to rest, therefore a low fibre diet is better until the diverticulitis has recovered.

## How to reduce fibre?

Fermentable fibre is only found in plant foods. Some animal products contain fibre eg. tough/gristly meat and sausage skins. When you start eating fibre again, gradually increase how much you are having and drink plenty of water to allow your bowels to adjust and reduce abdominal discomfort.





## Fibre Swaps

- 1** Avoid Wholemeal & Wholegrain Cereals → Choose White varieties
- 2** Avoid dried fruit, nuts & seeds
- 3** Choose processed foods with less than 2g fibre per serve
- 4** Remove seeds, woody stalks & skins of fruit & vegetables → Cook all until soft
- 5** Puree food where possible

## What else can help reduce occurrence of diverticulitis?

Eat less highly processed foods, red & processed meats  
Get enough Vitamin D  
Choose Wholegrain cereals  
Maintain a healthy weight  
Eat more fruit & vegetables  
Reduce stress  
Drink at least 2L fluid each day  
Follow an anti-inflammatory, Mediterranean diet  
Move your body for at least 30 mins/day

## Can I eat nuts, grains, corn or tomato seeds?

It is *not* recommended to eat these during a bout of diverticulitis. Once the bowel has recovered, these are a source of fibre and should be included as part of a healthy diet.

## About

Sarah is an Accredited Practising Dietitian with experience in gastrointestinal and women's health. She has completed specialist dietetic training in FODMAPs and IBS, Prenatal Nutrition and Eating Disorders.

### Need some help?

M: 0412 025 593 E: [sarah@wholelifefood.com.au](mailto:sarah@wholelifefood.com.au) W: [www.wholelifefood.com.au](http://www.wholelifefood.com.au)

**Please note - this is general diet advice only. For a personalised assessment and advice please contact Wholelife Nutrition.**