

# Diverticular disease: diagnosis and management

Information for the public

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## Diverticular disease: the care you should expect

Diverticular disease affects the large intestine (bowel). As people get older, small bulges called 'diverticula' can develop in the lining of their intestine. These are very common and don't usually cause any symptoms. But in a few people they can cause symptoms like abdominal pain, bloating and bleeding from the rectum (bottom). Rarely they can lead to complications like infections, abscesses or blockages in the intestine.

We want this guideline to make a difference to people with diverticular disease by making sure:

- people get the right diagnosis straightaway and their symptoms are not mistaken for other bowel conditions
- people get better advice on controlling their symptoms by making lifestyle changes
- antibiotics are only offered when they're really needed
- people are referred quickly if they have complications that need urgent treatment.

## Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professional should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

Your healthcare professional should make sure you have the advice you need to manage your condition, for example about changing your diet, drinking plenty of fluids and what pain relief to use. They should also explain the symptoms that mean you might have an infection or a complication that needs treatment.

If you need to make decisions about treatment, think about:

- What are you most worried about – are there risks or downsides to any treatments that worry you more than others?
- How will the treatment affect your day to day life?
- What happens if you don't want to have a particular treatment?

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about diverticular disease.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Guts UK](#), 020 7486 0341
- [Bladder & Bowel Community](#), 01926 357220

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by diverticular disease and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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