

High-fiber foods = GREEN DIET

A high-fibre diet is usually advised as it helps to keep stools (faeces) soft and bulky and reduces pressure on the colon. It can ease pain, bloating, constipation and diarrhoea and prevents hard stools becoming lodged within the pouches. It can also help to prevent the formation of further diverticula, which may reduce the risk of the condition getting any worse.

We need about 18 g of fibre each day, which should come from a variety of high-fibre foods. You may have symptoms of wind and bloating if you suddenly increase the amount of fibre you eat. Any increase should be gradual to prevent this, and to allow your gut (intestine) to become used to the extra fibre. A useful guide is to make one change every few days. For example, start by swapping white bread for wholemeal bread. Introduce something new every few days, such as adding beans or extra vegetables to a casserole or Bolognese, or having a piece of fruit for pudding.

High-fibre foods to include:

- Whole grains, fruit and vegetables.
- Wholemeal or whole-wheat bread and flour (for baking).
- Wholegrain breakfast cereals such as All-Bran®, Weetabix®, muesli, etc.
- Brown rice and whole-wheat pasta.
- Wheat bran.
- Beans, pulses and legumes.

Meeting the government recommendation of eating at least five fruit and vegetable portions each day will make sure that you are well on your way to getting plenty of fibre. A portion is about 80 g or what roughly fits in the palm of your hand. Apples, pears, oranges, blueberries, strawberries, broccoli, asparagus and dried figs are all excellent fibre sources.

Fibre supplements may be advised if a high-fibre diet does not ease symptoms. Several types are available at pharmacies, health food shops, or on prescription. A pharmacist will advise you. Although the effects of fibre supplements to ease symptoms may be seen in a few days, it may take as long as four weeks.

Note: some people have a different response to fibre than others. So it is very much trial and error as to what is most suitable for you. Some people report that a high-fibre diet or certain fibre supplements cause some persistent mild symptoms such as mild pains and bloating. This may be to do with the type of fibre being consumed. **Insoluble** fibre, found in cereals, wheat bran and nuts, may cause more wind and bloating. Eating a lot of bran-based foods or taking bran supplements can particularly aggravate symptoms in some people. Therefore, it may be helpful to have more **soluble** fibre (the type of fibre that can be dissolved in water), found mostly in fruit and vegetables. However, many foods contain both types of fibre, so when introducing a new high-fibre food, monitor your symptoms and adjust your diet accordingly.

- Dietary sources of soluble fibre include oats, ispaghula (psyllium), nuts, flax seeds, lentils, beans, fruit and vegetables. A fibre supplement called ispaghula powder is also available from pharmacies and health food shops.
- Insoluble fibre is chiefly found in corn (maize) bran, wheat bran, nuts and some fruit and vegetables.

Low-fiber foods = **AMBER DIET**

Low-fiber foods to consider eating if you have symptoms of diverticulitis include:

- white rice, white bread, or white pasta, but avoid gluten-containing foods if you're **intolerant**
- dry, low-fiber cereals
- processed fruits such as applesauce or canned peaches
- cooked animal proteins such as fish, poultry, or eggs
- olive oil or other oils
- yellow squash, zucchini, or pumpkin: peeled, seeds removed, and cooked
- cooked spinach, beets, carrots, or asparagus
- potatoes with no skin
- fruit and vegetable juices

Clear liquid diet = **RED DIET**

A **clear liquid diet** is a more restrictive approach to relieving diverticulitis symptoms. Your doctor may prescribe it for a short period of time. A clear liquid diet usually consists of:

- water
- ice chips
- ice pops with frozen fruit puree or pieces of finely chopped fruit
- soup broth or stock
- gelatin, such as Jell-O
- tea or coffee without any creams, flavors, or sweeteners
- clear electrolyte drinks