

Diverticulitis

This information sheet aims to answer any questions you may have about your care after discharge.

You or your family member have been seen in the Emergency Department and have been diagnosed with diverticulitis.

Diverticulitis is inflammation of small pouches of tissue (called diverticula) that bulge outwards from the wall of the intestine. Many people have diverticula and some may develop the symptoms of diverticulitis.

Signs and symptoms of diverticulitis

The most common signs of diverticulitis are:

- Abdominal pain
- Fevers, chills, or hot and cold sweats.

How to treat diverticulitis

Many cases of diverticulitis don't need admission to hospital.

They can be managed at home and should improve over a few days.

Treatment may consist of measures including:

- Taking painkillers to reduce discomfort. These may be over-the-counter pain medicines such as paracetamol or stronger medicines that require a prescription. Taking Buscopan may help with cramping abdominal pain.
- Antibiotics have now been demonstrated to be unnecessary for most patients with diverticulitis. If your doctor does decide to give you a course of antibiotics you will be given a script.
- A normal diet is recommended when you have mild diverticulitis. Once recovered you should maintain a high-fibre diet. It is not necessary to avoid nuts and seeds.

Discharge home from the Emergency Department

On discharge you will receive:

- A discharge letter (a copy of this will be sent to your GP)
- Sick certificate or carer's certificate as required
- Discharge scripts – as determined by your treating doctor
- Any external CT scans you brought to hospital with you.

Follow up

Your CT scan will be reviewed by a senior colorectal doctor and they will contact you if you need any further investigations. You are advised to see your GP within a week.

If you are worried your options are to:

1. Arrange an appointment with your local doctor
2. Contact an After Hours Service via:
 - Your local doctor's contact number
 - National Home Doctor service: 13 74 25
www.homedoctor.com.au
 - Healthdirect: 1800 022 222
www.healthdirect.gov.au
3. Visit your nearest Emergency Department
4. Call 000 for an ambulance if you think it is a medical emergency

Further information

There is a health information fact sheet called 'Diverticulitis' written by the Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA) available at: www.gesa.org.au

For more information

Emergency Department
Flinders Medical Centre
Flinders Drive
Bedford Park SA 5042

Telephone: 08 8204 5511
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

Emergency Department
Noarlunga Hospital
Alexander Kelly Drive
Noarlunga Centre SA 5168

Telephone: (08) 8384 9288

If you require this information in an alternative language or format please contact SA Health on the details provided and they will make every effort to assist you.



This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.