Diverticulosis and Diverticulitis

**What is diverticulosis?**
Diverticulosis is the presence of pockets in the lining of the large intestine. Most of the time, people don't even know they have it!

**What causes diverticulosis?**
Researchers don't know for sure why these pockets form. Here are some things that may cause them:

- High red meat and fat diets
- Low fiber diets
- Smoking
- NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) use (ex: Aspirin, Ibuprofen, naproxen sodium)
- Steroid and opioid use
- Obesity
- Getting older
- Genetics
- Slower digestive systems

**How do I know if I have this?**
Most people don't know they have diverticulosis until their first colonoscopy. Some people find out when they have an infection in the pockets, called diverticulitis.
What is diverticulitis?
Diverticulitis is an infection of the pockets in your large intestine. Most people do not get this, but around 20% may. Some symptoms of diverticulitis can be:
- Stomach pain
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Nausea and Vomiting
- A tight stomach

It is important to seek medical help if you have any of these symptoms. Remember to follow your doctor's instructions for treatment.

How can I avoid this?
Because we don't know what causes it, there isn't a sure way to stop it. Here are a few tips that may help decrease your risk:
- Increase fiber in your diet (whole grains, fruits, veggies, beans, nuts, seeds)
- Limit red meat
- Consider a probiotic
- Get regular checkups
- Stay up to date on your screenings
- Stop smoking

Check with your doctor before changing your medications, supplements, or lifestyle.

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