

# Diverticulitis

## Nutrition Guide



With so many rigid diets and information about quick fixes on how manage your diverticulitis, it can be hard to find which program is right for you. And what's worse: how frustrating it feels when you've tried diet after diet and still don't feel any closer to managing your symptoms.

Diverticulitis may have impacted you unexpectedly. To best manage diverticulitis, it's important to learn the foods to eat that can help avoid a flare-up, understand the protocols if your diverticulitis becomes "active" and then integrate these specific recommendations into your day-to-day routine.

Say hello to our 'Diverticulitis Nutrition Guide' - complete with a done for you 7-day meal plan (to avoid flare ups), grocery shopping list and simple guide to foods to eat and avoid and fiber intake.

We understand that getting started is the hardest part. We believe that developing an educational foundation in nutrition and creating a healthy lifestyle is the optimal equation for long-term success. We're not interested in a quick fix that's going to leave you high and dry after acting on a bunch of false promises.

We can't wait to see the healthier, more confident you!



Britney Kennedy

Founder & CEO

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# What is Diverticulitis?

Diverticulitis is the active, symptom-presenting form of diverticulosis. Many people live years with diverticulosis without ever showing symptoms. Diverticulosis is diagnosed when small pouches form in the lining of the digestive system, known as diverticula. These pouches develop in weak spots of your digestive system. Over time, they push through the walls of the digestive system and can become inflamed and infected.

## Risk Factors that Increase Chances of Developing Diverticulitis

- **Obesity**

Having a BMI over 30 is considered overweight. A research study by the [American Gastroenterological Association](#) found that patients considered overweight/obese were much more likely to experience diverticulitis flare-ups.

- **Diet high in red meat**

Consuming a diet high in red meat is associated with higher body fat and weight gain. Those who consume a diet consisting of mostly red meat are [58% more likely to develop diverticulitis](#), compared to those who do not.

- **Lack of exercise**

Exercise lowers the risk of diverticulitis by decreasing [constipation](#) and releasing pressure from the digestive system. When there is a lot of pressure across the digestive system, small pouches are more likely to form.

- **Diet low in fiber**

A diet high in fiber has shown to aid in digestion helping to regulate bowel movements. The more you go, the less pressure in your system, decreasing the risk of developing diverticulitis.

- **Age**

As you age, the connective tissue in the lining of your digestive system weakens, resulting in a higher chance of developing pouches that can rupture and become inflamed.

When a Diverticulitis flare-up occurs, you may experience severe [abdominal pain, fever, nausea and a change in bowel habits](#). Mild cases can be treated with diet, rest, and antibiotics. Severe cases may require surgery. About 75% of cases are considered mild and can be treated easily with lifestyle changes. If left untreated, diverticulitis complications may occur, including [perforations, abscesses, obstructions, and fistula, within the digestive system](#). Long term impacts include [sepsis \(systemic infection\)](#).



# What is a Diverticulitis Diet?

Although there is no specific diet recommended for Diverticulitis, there are diet modifications that help prevent a diverticulitis flare and others that help treat a diverticulitis flare. Following a preventative diverticulitis diet is the best way to avoid a potential flare. The primary cause for a Diverticulitis flare is constipation. Following a diet high in fiber is key. Fiber helps to speed up digestion and prevent too much pressure from building in the intestines. The main components of a diverticulitis diet are fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

## What to Eat to Prevent a Diverticulitis Flare-up

A flare up can occur when pressure in your digestive system is too high, (constipation). To avoid constipation, consume a high quality, gut-healthy diet consisting of lean protein and high fiber.

[Learn more about Foods to Eat with Diverticulitis](#)

### Key Components of a Diet to Prevent a Diverticulitis Flare-up

<b>Lean Protein</b> Eating meat low in fat will aid in weight loss and keep you feeling full longer.	White meat poultry, white fish, plant-based proteins
<b>High Fiber</b> Insoluble fiber adds bulk to the stool and increases the rate at which food passes through the stomach and intestines, helping to prevent constipation.	Whole grains, brown rice, fortified cereals, quinoa
<b>Vegetables</b> Starchy vegetables will increase fiber consumption aiding indigestion.	Leafy greens, peas, squash, parsnips, sweet potatoes
<b>Fruit</b> Fruit high in fiber will help to relieve constipation, and boost immunity.	Pears, apples, oranges, prunes
<b>Healthy Fats</b> Fat is a biological necessity and will increase hormone production, aid in vitamin absorption, and improve heart health and brain function.	Avocado, nut butters, olive oil

## What foods should I avoid?

Certain foods can irritate your digestive lining and cause pain and discomfort. These foods are specific to each case of diverticulitis, so it is important to be mindful of specific trigger foods that may cause your flare-ups. Avoid foods that are hard to digest, so that these items do not become stuck in your GI diverticula (pouches).

### Food to **Avoid**

- **Seeds**

Poppy seeds, chia seeds, flax seed, sesame seeds can get stuck in diverticula. It is best to avoid fruit with seeds such as strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries

- **Raw Vegetables**

Veggies can be harder to digest because the insoluble fiber is fully intact and can increase pain and discomfort. Cooking your vegetables will help your body break down fiber easily.

- **Corn**

The fiber and sugar content in corn causes some stomach discomfort, causing [inflammation](#) in the digestive system.

- **Spicy Foods**

Spicy foods can lead to gut inflammation, resulting in vomiting and diarrhea. It is best to avoid these types of foods so that diverticulitis symptoms do not become worse.

- **Cruciferous Vegetables**

High fiber vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, and artichokes are high in fiber and can be difficult to digest. Eating them may cause gas and bloating.

- **Milk Products**

People with diverticulitis may not digest lactose well. Even people who are not lactose intolerant will notice bloating, gas and inflammation when eating and drinking products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt.

- **Greasy, High Fat, Fast Food**

High fat, fried food stimulates the digestive system and causes inflammation, resulting in acid reflux that can irritate diverticulitis symptoms.

## Diverticulitis and Fiber

Fiber is the most important nutrient in preventing a diverticulitis flare or alleviating its symptoms if one occurs. Depending on the stage of your condition, diverticulosis or diverticulitis, you may need to change the amount of fiber in your diet.

[Learn more about the importance of fiber in your Diverticulitis Diet](#)

<b>Diverticulosis</b> (inactive symptoms) During this stage, symptoms are not present and it is important to eat a high fiber diet to discourage inflammation and constipation.	<b>Diverticulitis</b> (active symptoms) During this stage, symptoms are active (flare-up) resulting in discomfort, inflammation, and infections. Consuming a low fiber diet allows your digestive system to heal.
<b>Food High in Fiber:</b> Whole grains Whole wheat breads and pastas Brown rice Potatoes Broccoli Brussel sprouts Cabbage Cauliflower Leafy Greens	<b>Food Low in Fiber:</b> White bread without nuts or seeds White rice Cooked vegetables without skin or seeds Oranges Cantaloupe Watermelon Eggs Poultry Dairy products

# How to Treat a Diverticulitis Flare-Up

Diverticulitis treatment depends on the severity of your symptoms. Mild cases of diverticulitis are treated using diet modifications and antibiotics. Severe cases will require immediate doctor attention, sometimes resulting in surgery. For mild cases of diverticulitis, treatment is designed to relieve stress on your digestive system, which gives your body time to rest and heal. Symptoms should improve in 2-3 days. Treatment decisions will progress depending on your specific symptoms.

[Learn more about Treatment of Diverticulitis Flare-Ups here](#)

## Progression of Treatment for Diverticulitis Flare-Up

1. Nothing by Mouth	Refrain from eating for a few hours up to one day.
2. Clear Liquid Diet	Begin to incorporate broth, ice pops, Jello, water, apple juice for a few days.
3. Soft Food Diet	When you start to feel better add yogurt, applesauce, rice, bananas, fruit without skin.
4. Return to Regular Diet	You should feel better within a few days. This is when you can slowly return to a regular diet.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: If at any point a fever develops, abdominal pain increases, or you are unable to keep clear liquids down, contact your doctor. These symptoms are sign of more adverse complications.*





## Diverticulitis Clear Liquid Diet

Mild cases of diverticulitis can be treated with nutrition therapy. Oftentimes, this process begins with a clear liquid diet. A diverticulitis clear liquid diet is a medically indicated protocol for severe GI conditions. This liquid diet is a temporary solution that gives your digestive system a chance to rest and heal.

The objective is to keep your body hydrated while still providing you with the nutrients you need. The clear diet can be helpful for a day or two; we work with you to make a plan to transition your system away from the liquid diet once your symptoms dissipate. If you have diabetes, [work with a nutritionist for diverticulitis](#), so that we can make sure your body gets the right amount of carbohydrates and we can help you monitor your blood sugar.

### Components of a Diverticulitis Clear Liquid Diet

- Broth
- Fruit juices without pulp
- Ice chips
- Ice pops without bits of fruit or pulp
- Gelatin
- Water
- Honey
- Tea or coffee without cream
- Jell-O
- Sports Drinks

### A typical day on a diverticulitis clear liquid diet may look like:

Breakfast	1 bowl of gelatin 1 glass pulp-free fruit juice 1 cup tea without dairy Sugar or honey
Snack	1 glass pulp-free fruit juice 1 bowl gelatin
Lunch	1 glass pulp-free fruit juice 1 glass water 1 cup broth 1 bowl gelatin
Snack	1 pulp-free popsicle 1 cup tea without dairy Sugar or honey
Dinner	1 glass pulp-free fruit juice or water 1 cup broth 1 bowl gelatin 1 cup tea without dairy Sugar or honey

## BRAT Protocol for Diverticulitis

The BRAT Diet was created as a mnemonic device to help people remember the foods that can help alleviate a diverticulitis flare.

The original foods in this protocol include bananas, rice, apples and toast. However, it has since been expanded to include other mild foods that can help alleviate diverticulitis symptoms.

The BRAT Diet includes specific foods across all of the food groups: vegetables, fruits, starches, proteins and even drinks.

[Learn more about the BRAT Diet for Diverticulosis](#)

## Low Residue Diet for Diverticulitis

Hopefully, the clear liquid diet has calmed your digestive system. Once you are feeling normal again, we recommend transitioning to a low residue diverticulitis diet. This philosophy consists of eating low fiber foods that your body can digest easily. Think of “[low residue](#)” as gentle on the digestive system.

### Low residue foods include:

- Canned or cooked fruits without skin or seeds
- Canned or cooked vegetables without the skin
- Eggs, fish and poultry
- Refined white bread
- Fruit and vegetable juice without pulp
- Low fiber cereal
- Milk, yogurt, and cheese
- White rice, pasta, and noodles

### Will I ever be able to eat my favorite foods again?

Yes, you should be able to. Unless you have an extreme condition, your GI system should be able to tolerate most foods within a few weeks after a flare-up or “attack”.

You may choose to avoid foods that cause severe issues for your body, such as whole intact seeds. Your diverticulitis diet should always feel as though you are in control of your routine and your food choices.

Even after a flare-up, do your best to not fear food! We can help!

# Take the Next Step

Diets seem easy to follow at first, but in reality – they don't work as a long-term, sustainable solution. I hope our Diverticulitis Nutrition Guide is the secret sauce you need to start managing your Diverticulitis symptoms and making sustainable lifestyle changes.

At OnPoint, our personalized program matches you with a certified dietitian or nutritionist (your nutrition coach) who will learn about your health goals, provide ongoing support and accountability, and enable you to become self-sufficient while working towards your end-goal.

My team and I would be honored to be part of your health journey. So, take that next step and schedule your consultation. Our team has helped 2000+ individuals accomplish their health goals to become a happier, healthier, more confident versions of themselves.

During the consultation, we'll get to know more about your goals, your story and the struggles you've faced in managing your Diverticulitis. From there, we'll determine the best steps forward using our one-on-one approach. We can't wait to meet you!

**Britney & the OnPoint Team**

[Get Started](#)