

## **What is Diverticulitis Treatment?**

Did you know that 35% of the US population under 50 years and 58% of the population over 60 years, are afflicted by Diverticulitis? Diverticulitis is one of the most-common colorectal conditions in the Western world.

An unhealthy colon or one which is damaged by poor lifestyle and diet develops pouch-like bags on the digestive system walls. These bag-like formations are called diverticula. If the diverticula are infected and inflamed, the condition is called Diverticulitis.

At Huntington Colorectal Surgeons, Dr. Howard Kaufman, Dr. Gabriel Akopian and Dr. Julianne Golan have been treating diverticulitis patients for years. They understand the unique challenges of living with Diverticulitis and their priority is to help relieve the condition and restore your colorectal health.

Visit our Pasadena colorectal surgical facility for world-class treatment.

## **Causes of Diverticulitis and who is most susceptible?**

Doctors believe that diverticula form because of excessive pressure on the colon's inner walls. When food passing through the colon pushes against a weak section of the walls, the tissues may get damaged, resulting in the formation of diverticula.

Diverticula are more common in people who have diets that are high in animal fat and low in fiber. Your colon needs to put in more effort to move the food along the digestive tract, leading to extensive pressure on the colon walls. You may be vulnerable to the condition if you are:

- A smoker
- Highly obese
- On steroids or opiates

Diverticulitis sets-in when there is an injury to the diverticula. Constant friction between the food and the pouches, can cause inflammation, tenderness and pus formation.

## **Signs you may have Diverticulitis**

If you notice the following signs, please visit our experienced Pasadena colorectal surgeons for immediate treatment:

- Sudden, stabbing cramps in the abdominal region (usually on the left side).
- Abdominal bloating and tenderness.
- Difficulty defecating.
- Blood in stools.
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever.

In very serious cases, Diverticulitis can lead to the formation of an abscess, fistula or scar in the digestive tract. The condition may also result in intestinal tears or bowel obstruction.

If untreated, Diverticulitis can lead to a very serious condition called Peritonitis.

Peritonitis is the inflammation of the peritoneum (the tissues that line the abdomen). It occurs when the infected diverticula rupture and the bacterial infection spills into the abdomen,

infecting the abdominal walls. If unchecked, this bacterial infection can spread to the other organs and into the blood, increasing your risk of multiple organ failure.

Our board-certified doctors will be able to evaluate your vulnerability to Peritonitis and administer treatment in time to prevent the Diverticulitis from worsening.

### **Diagnosing Diverticulitis**

Depending on the symptoms you show and the severity of the symptoms, we may recommend one or a combination of these tests for diagnosis:

- Abdominal ultrasound, CT scan, MRI or X-ray
- Colonoscopy
- Blood, stool & urine test to check for bacterial infection
- Pelvic exams
- Rectal exams

Based on the results we obtain; our experts will then design a customized treatment to reduce medical risks and restore your digestive tract to health.

### **Treatments for Diverticulitis**

In less-severe cases of Diverticulitis, you may be put on antibiotics for a few weeks to treat the infection. You will also be advised to change your diet to prevent diverticula rupturing.

But, if the Diverticulitis is serious or you have been diagnosed with Peritonitis, you will need emergency surgery to prevent the spread of infection to other parts of the body. At Huntington Colorectal Surgeons, we specialize in robotic surgery and we use minimally-invasive and laparoscopic technology to access the diverticula, drain the infection, clean the area and stitch you up.

If the infection is widespread, you may need a colon resection, where we will access the infected section of the colon through a tiny incision and remove the diseased part. If it's possible to save the colon by allowing the infection to heal, we perform a short-term colostomy. Here, a part of the colon is removed, a stoma is created and a bag is attached to collect the stool. Once the colon heals, the resected portion is reattached, and the colostomy is reversed. After this surgery, your bowel will function as normal.

For more information, consult our surgeons today.