

Diverticulitis

**Some natural plants
and food ingredients
that can reduce the
symptoms**



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breakthrough Lepicol range.'

This is a disease where the walls of the colon, for one reason or another, become weakened.

One of the most obvious causes is long term constipation. When waste matter hangs around too long in your large bowel, it becomes drier and this makes your stools hard and more difficult to evacuate.

This is why constipation is a vicious circle. The worse it gets the harder your stools get and the more difficult they become to expel.

The muscles in the wall of your colon are responsible for the peristalsis action of pushing waste matter through your system. If your stools don't hang around too long and are nice and moist because your diet has lots of good, soluble fibre in it, then the peristalsis action of your colon is extremely effective and everything works without any straining.

But, if your colon wall has to continually contract against increasingly dry and hardened faeces then, over time, it can become weakened. Eventually, if this is allowed to continue, the weakened colon wall will be unable to resist the continued outward pressure of hardened waste matter and small pockets will develop.

Haemorrhoids can be caused by downward pressure in the same way.

The development of these small pockets can happen very gradually, so the first time you know anything about them might be when you start to get abdominal pain or tummy 'upsets' or even the passing of blood.

Also, the symptoms of diverticulitis can often be confused with irritable bowel syndrome

I do get many people calling our office who have thought little about their constipation for many years. Not going for two or three days might be the norm for some people but if you are one of these, you cannot expect this to continue without some sort of consequence.

The pockets that are formed are known as 'diverticula.' If there is just one pocket then this is called diverticulum. Good if you remember your Latin!

Pockets that have been formed for some time have the potential to become infected and inflamed by waste matter accumulating. This can adversely affect the delicate bacterial balance in your colon which can become inflamed. In many cases, the consequence of this is diarrhoea. When infection takes place, this condition is then referred to as diverticulitis.

Eventually, if not treated, these pockets can actually perforate your bowel wall and cause the life threatening condition known as peritonitis.

Who is at risk of getting Diverticulitis?

It is rare for young people to get this disease. As you get older, your bowels like any other part of your body can become weaker so this is why it is so important to look after yourself more carefully as you mature.

But have no doubt that the longer you have been constipated, the more likely you are to develop diverticular disease. This is why prevention is better than cure in the case of diverticular disease. Below I am going to recommend some natural nutrients that can help you prevent these small pockets from developing in the first place.

These same ingredients can also help to ease the symptoms if pockets have already developed.

It is important to point out that this disease is far more common in western countries where natural fibre levels are low. In rural African countries where there are no refined diets, diverticular disease is not heard of.

So it is clear. What you eat is everything to do with diverticulitis from occurring in the first place.

Dietary recommendations

In the early stages of diverticular disease, symptoms can be kept in check and prevented from becoming worse by some sensible diet choices.

Naturally, a diet which is high in organic fresh fruit and vegetables will help cleanse the system and prevent waste matter from hanging around for too long. Anything you can do in your diet to cleanse your bowels can only help this condition.

As can reducing those foods that can clog your digestive tract and cause constipation in the first place. The main culprits are all dairy products and wheat.

In simple terms you need to reduce your red meat, dairy and wheat and increase your salad foods, vegetables and fruit. I am not talking about five fruit and veg per day but ten!

As a general comment, I always recommend that anyone with bowel problems should remove those foods from their diet which are potentially irritating.

This includes bran fibre.

Water is particularly important if you have diverticular disease. It is vital to get a good 'flush through' with plenty of water throughout the day – try and drink at least an extra 2 to 3 litres to what you would normally.

Also, as I am always pointing out, your bowels are just one part of your digestive system and they do not operate in isolation. This means that you should do everything that you possibly can to ensure that your food, once it goes into your mouth, is digested effectively.

Food that is broken down properly, earlier on in the digestive process, will be far easier for the bowels to handle later on. Therefore, the one thing you can do to get the whole digestive process off to a really good start is to chew your food effectively. This means that instead of gulping it down, you should be chewing each mouthful between 30 to 40 times, liquidising the contents before swallowing.

This makes it easier for the stomach, small intestine and also your bowels to perform their task in the digestive process more efficiently.

Changing your diet in a short period of time can be quite difficult for most of us. I am therefore going to recommend some natural plant/supplement ingredients that can help prevent diverticular disease from happening in the first place or reduce the symptoms should you have it already.

Some natural nutrients that can work together to reduce the symptoms of diverticulitis.

Give your digestion a helping hand with a digestive enzyme complex.

The first natural supplement I am going to recommend is a digestive enzyme complex. The reason for this is that many of us, particularly those of us over 50, may not be producing enzymes at sufficient levels to break down our foods and absorb nutrients as efficiently as we would like. Also, enzyme activity is now sadly lacking in much of our fresh food.

So helping to correct these deficiencies can be a very important first step in overcoming constipation.

Traditional plant remedies can be helpful too. The papaya leaf is known to help protein digestion and soothe dyspepsia and gastritis. Ginger has also been found to ease pain, reduce inflammation and stimulate gastric secretions, and fenugreek seed has been traditionally used to ease stomach pains. Incidentally, the seeds of fenugreek have also been shown to stimulate enzyme secretion.

But if all this is too much hassle, a good digestive enzyme complex will do the job for you.

Probiotics – our ‘pro-life’ friendly guys who can help you to smell nice

Next I am going to recommend our friendly probiotic bacteria which I suspect you know all about. In fact there are over 500 different types but there are five that are known to have significant importance. These are: *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*.

The weight of bacteria in your colon is estimated to be around 2 lbs, which is pretty significant.

Most of life is a balance and your bowels are no different. The crucial thing about any balance is to try and make sure that the good things exceed the bad. So it's your

job to try and make sure that the largest percentage of your bacteria is made up of the good guys.

In a healthy gut the good bacteria will outnumber the bad bacteria and keep them in check.

Good bacteria helps peristalsis which means if they are in short supply, the digestive process slows down creating an environment which favours constipation and diverticular disease.

Low levels of good bacteria can in fact be the starting point of a toxic colon and diverticular disease.

Topping up with a probiotic supplement is something I would recommend for anyone over 50. According to recent research, our levels of good bacteria start to deplete after this age.

Keeping the good bacteria high must therefore be a priority for everyone who suffers from constipation. Even if you don't want to take them every day, then certainly load up on them if you are going to anywhere that is a bit 'iffy' as far as the water is concerned.

Probiotics are not new. The discovery that certain types of bacteria could contribute to the health of the intestines and help ward off disease was first made way back in 1908 by the Russian scientist, Elis Metchnikoff. He was the first to use the term dysbiosis, to indicate an imbalance of gut bacteria. Since then more than ten thousand papers have been published demonstrating the benefits of friendly flora.

What causes us to be depleted of this wonderful bacteria?

Antibiotics - it is now well reported that antibiotics can be harmful to the health of your bowels. This is because they knock out the good guys as well as the bad. If you are prescribed antibiotics then remember to top up with good bacteria to prevent too much of a depletion. Remember also to not take the probiotics and antibiotics together. Leave a gap of around six hours.

In normal circumstances, healthy bacteria can be easily replenished with a good diet but if you have to have to have regular prescriptions then you must seriously consider a proper supplementation programme. Otherwise the short and long term health of your bowels could be compromised.

Constipation and diverticulitis are far more likely when bad bacteria exceeds the good.

One of the most simple things you can do is to take probiotic supplements and I recommend everyone should do this. In my experience a good probiotic supplement programme can play a significant role in overcoming toxic constipation.

So, probiotics are vital in the fight in overcoming constipation but there are several studies that now show that probiotics work better alongside other natural ingredients.

Fibre is particularly important for creating the right type of moist environment for healthy bacteria to proliferate and there is one type of fibre in particular that is better than all others in achieving this.

Fibre

In the US they are now recommending that the daily fibre intake should be more than 50g. I read recently that we, in the UK, tend to eat on average less than 15g per day. This is a massive difference and it just goes to show that if our fibre levels are that low, they are playing an insignificant role in our diet in general.

Low levels of fibre in your diet are also going to increase your chances of constipation and, ultimately, diverticular disease.

Many doctors will often recommend an increase in wheat bran to rectify this problem. However, wheat bran is abrasive by nature and this can make a sensitive situation worse. Therefore if your bowels are inflamed and diarrhoea is prominent, I would avoid wheat fibre.

Instead, I would opt for a more soluble type of fibre like Psyllium husks which are much more viscous by nature.

Psyllium – the Rolls Royce of fibre

So, the third natural ingredient I am going to recommend is psyllium husk.

This is the first fibre that I myself rely on. If you have read anything that I have written before then you will know that I always refer to this plant as the ‘Rolls Royce’ of fibre simply because, in my view, it really is the best.

The reason for this is that it is an extremely gentle fibre. It absorbs more water than any other fibre. In fact it absorbs a staggering 25 times it’s own weight in water.

Remember that the emphasis these days is on soluble fibre because of the extra health benefits this brings.

Well, psyllium is the most soluble fibre you can get. It is so gentle. I refer to it as a ‘chamois’ leather rather than the brillo effect you can get with bran fibre.

The great thing about psyllium is that it is good for both constipation and diarrhoea.

In the case of constipation, because of the soft gel it forms when mixed with water. Psyllium, keeps your stools soft and moist and therefore easier to pass.

In the long term, this can help prevent waste matter from getting too hard and causing the type of pressure that can cause diverticular disease and haemorrhoids in the first place.

Psyllium is also good for consolidating stools if you get diarrhoea when the diverticular pockets get inflamed.

The soft gel that psyllium forms when mixed with water that I referred to earlier, helps to consolidate waste matter as it rushes through and this helps to slow things down. Once this happens, the all-important friendly bacteria has a chance to get a foothold again.

The friendly bacteria just love the moist environment that the psyllium creates. It literally thrives on it. Taking psyllium and probiotics together form a good partnership

Two recent bits of research – one in Holland and the other in Japan - has proven the synergy between these two ingredients.

However, there is another type of fibre that operates in a different way to psyllium which can also help you overcome constipation and ease the symptoms of diverticular disease.

The name of this fibre is inulin – a truly remarkable ingredient that has so many nutritional benefits.

Inulin – a unique fibre which actually helps to prevent putrefaction in the large colon.

The fourth ingredient is another fibre – inulin - which is commonly found in root vegetables like onions, leeks, chicory artichokes and agave.

This fibre is different to psyllium in that it doesn't expand and have the 'chamois leather' effect of psyllium. It actually cleanses in a different way which is why the two fibres are so complementary when taken together.

It works like this. As the food containing the inulin is digested, the inulin passes through the small intestine without getting broken down. Once it arrives at the colon or large intestine, it ferments in a friendly way and is converted into bifidum bacteria, one of the most important strains of friendly bacteria.

This is absolutely brilliant because it is in the large intestine in particular where you need loads of good bacteria. Incidentally, the inulin also acts as a fermentable source of food for other friendly bacteria already present in the colon, so it has a double whammy effect.

Added to that, because it is not converted until it actually reaches the colon, inulin can be a much more stable way of promoting your friendly bacteria than normal probiotics.

This means that inulin is not a probiotic but it is converted to one type of probiotic strain once it arrives in the large colon. This is why it was given the term as being a 'prebiotic' by Professor Glen Gibson from Reading University who was a pioneer of much of the early research on inulin.

Since then there have been numerous studies on inulin which is now known to have a number of other benefits as well as its prebiotic properties.

Inulin is available in powder form. It is a white powder and in most cases extracted from chicory. When added to liquid it dissolves almost completely, so you can hardly see it. This makes it easier to take than psyllium but, as I mentioned earlier, it doesn't form the cleansing type of gel that psyllium does. It works in a different way.

I have worked with this wonderful ingredient for more than 15 years and found it absolutely brilliant for preventing constipation and ultimately, therefore, diverticular disease.

Taking quite a lot of inulin on its own can make you quite windy at first but usually this settles down after a few days. However, I have always felt that inulin and psyllium work better when taken together. The presence of psyllium clearly has the potential to enhance the prebiotic effect of inulin.

Summary

It is reckoned that 85% of bowel disease is preventable and diverticular disease is no exception. Ensuring that you pass large, moist stools at least once per day is one way you can prevent constipation and this, ultimately, has to be the best way to prevent diverticulitis.

If however you are reading this report because you already have diverticular disease then the recommendations I am making in this report – alongside a fresh food diet with high levels of fruit and vegetables – should help to reduce the symptoms you are presently experiencing.

Other free reports that may relate to diverticular disease:

Natural nutrients that have been shown to work synergistically to reduce the symptoms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Could glutamine be the missing link for your bowel health? (A leaky gut report).

Colon Massage –now you can ease constipation, trapped wind and even a sensitive bowel with a soothing colon massage with aromatherapy oil.

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