Causes of Diverticulitis

Diverticulitis is caused by infected or inflamed diverticula pouches.

These little pouches usually develop when naturally weak places in your colon give way under pressure. This pressure causes marble-sized pouches to protrude through the colon wall, primarily from the stress on the intestinal wall while constipated. In Western populations, pouches are most common in your sigmoid and descending colon — the lower portions of your large intestine just above your rectum on your left side.

Diverticular disease essentially results from eating a diet with too little fiber. Fiber itself is not generally digested, it passes through the intestines pretty much unchanged, softening the stools and their passage.

Lack of fiber will begin a sequence of events:

- Small dry stools will cause the intestinal muscles to contract with greater force to pass the stool along, which will create a higher pressure in the large intestines.

- This excess pressure will in turn lead to weakened spots in the colon walls that eventually bulge out and form pouches called diverticula.

More often than not, the pouches form in the sigmoid colon, which is the lower left part of the colon that connects to the rectum.

This area of the colon is normally subject to the highest amount of pressure for two reasons:

1. As our stool passes through the lower intestines it extracts a great deal of the water from the liquid rejected waste and transfers it to the circulatory system via the blood vessels and the extra waste becomes more solid as it travels down.
2. Second because it is the narrowest portion of the large intestine.

Diverticulitis attacks begin when one or more pouches become inflamed or infected, causing
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severe abdominal pain, fever, nausea and a marked change in your bowel habits.

The primary cause of the infection is when constipation occurs and small bits of feces become trapped in the diverticulum pockets. Food can also become trapped in these pockets making wonderful breeding ground for bacteria. Signs of diverticulitis can range from minor inflammation to a massive infection; fortunately this only seems to occur in about 10 to 25 percent of people with diverticulosis.

Pay close attention to these symptoms of diverticulitis:

- abdominal pain
- tenderness around the left side of the lower abdomen
- fever
- nausea
- vomiting
- chills
- cramping

The more severe the infection, the more severe the symptoms and complications will become. Acute cases of diverticulitis can eventually lead to bleeding, infection, perforations, tears, or blockages.

Please contact your doctor with any of these signs and get checked out right away. These symptoms can also be confused with other causes of abdominal pain such as appendicitis, pelvic inflammatory disease or irritable bowel syndrome.

As of right now there is no treatment has been found to prevent diverticular disease from developing. And, once formed, diverticula are permanent. But a maintaining a healthy diet high in fiber and ample water daily increases stool bulk and prevents constipation, in addition experts believe it may:

- Help keep more diverticula from forming.
- Help keep the condition from worsening.
- Help control the risk of a diverticulitis attack.