Seeds, Nuts, and Popcorn

Remember as a kid your parents swore if you didn’t wear a jacket in the chilled air you’d get a cold?

Then as an adult you learn that when we acquire a cold it is a result of one of many hundreds of virus’s that are floating around in the air. So for all those slightly chilly days that you played outside and sweat to death riding your bike or jump roping in a parka, you’ve learned it was all in vain. The same seems to be with the fact that for years many diagnosed with diverticulosis were recommended by their doctors that they avoid all seeds and nuts, including foods with small seeds, such as tomatoes, cucumbers and strawberries. It was believed that these tiny particles could get lodged in the diverticula sacs, causing inflammation and possibly infection leading into diverticulitis. But now there is no scientific evidence that seeds and nuts are the cause for diverticulitis flare ups. We are learning that eating a high-fiber diet — which may include nuts and seeds — can actually reduce the risk of diverticular disease. In addition all of these items become digesten and soft by the time they reach the colon.

Don’t get me wrong and run out a buy your favorite salsa quite yet, if you have an attack of diverticulitis and you believe that nuts and seeds are related to triggering your attacks, you may still have to stay away from the little culprits. Only you can tell the comfort level of your own body and just what it can handle. If you are prone to diverticulitis and are on a healthy upswing many doctors now believe it’s okay to experiment with some seeds or nuts to find out whether or not your body can tolerate them and how much. As you experiment with the various nuts and seeds take caution and try to chew them well. However don’t forget that the most important part
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is to just make sure you get enough fiber from other dietary sources.

If you are having an attack of diverticulitis some people have found that eating nuts and seeds can be irritating to the inflamed intestinal lining, so it is suggested to stay away from them. However if you do have some cravings going here are a few suggestions that won’t take too much time to prepare.

- For pizza and pasta sauces use tomato sauce and crushed tomatoes in the can, generally these are both seed free, add some wonderful spices and enjoy the spaghetti.
- For yogurts make sure they are the flavored variety, not the fruit added to avoid any chance of fruit seeds.
- If you’re really craving chips and salsa take the few minutes of extra effort to quarter the tomato and peppers and scrape the seeds out. Add some onions, cilantros, lime, and some amazing Mexican spices and seasonings then dip away.
- And for those torturous movie nights there are a variety of virtually hull free popcorns available in specialty stores and on line. These lines of specialty popcorns have very thin hulls that disappear or become extremely thin as the popcorn cooks.
- Just in case you are as concerned as my 6 year old would be, I am happy to report that chocolate chips and candy sprinkles are actually on the safer side; they are a complex carbohydrate and actually break down in the smaller intestines.

So enjoy that chocolate chip cookie with all your favorite taste buds. Maybe even with the windows down in the car and no jacket on a rainy day.