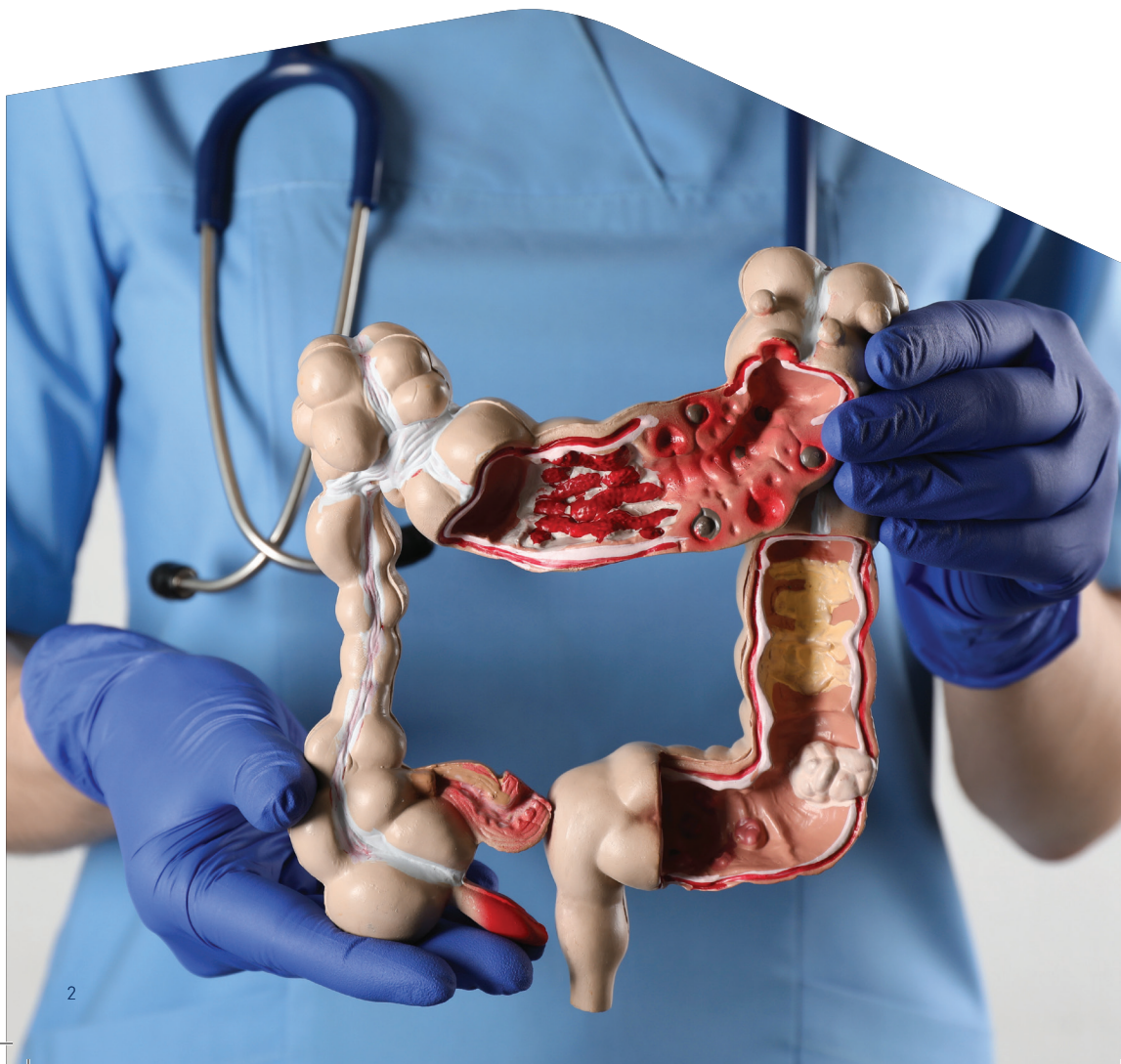


Diverticular Disease

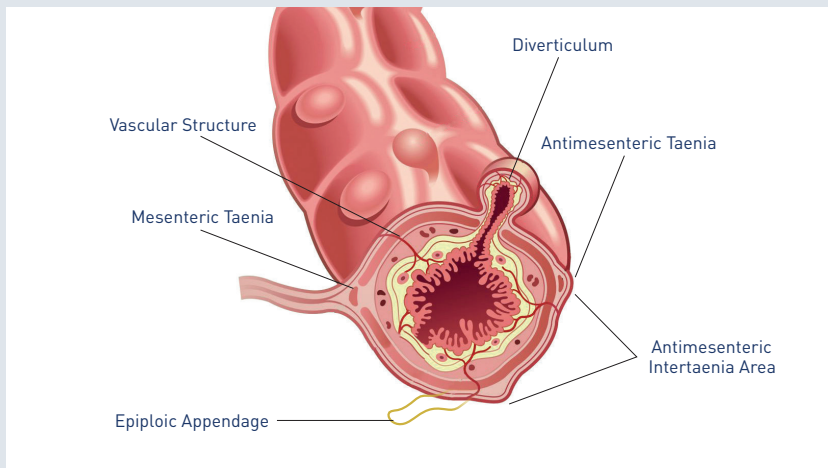
The Department of Surgery sees patients for a wide range of surgical services. These include Colorectal, Endocrine, Breast, Upper GI, Bariatrics, Hepatobiliary, Plastics, Neurosurgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery. Our highly qualified consultants use minimally-invasive surgery and surgical endoscopy for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in the treatment of these conditions. We provide inpatient and outpatient care with a 24-hour acute surgical service. Day surgery (endoscopy) and minor surgery (lumps and bumps) are also offered at Jurong Medical Centre.



What is diverticular disease?

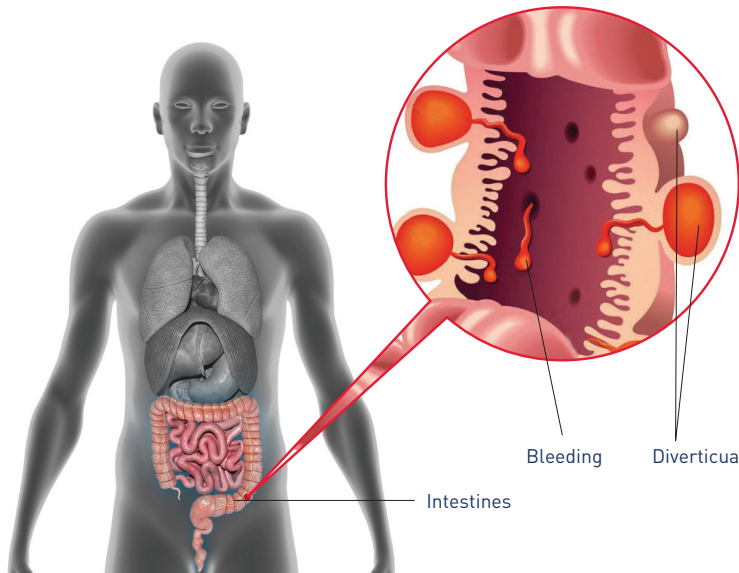
Diverticular disease is made up of two conditions: diverticulosis and diverticulitis. Diverticulosis is a condition where a patient has diverticula (small bulging sacs in the colon) that push outward from the colon wall. They are commonly found near the end of the left colon.

Diverticular disease is common in developed countries where diets are typically low in fibre but high in processed carbohydrates. It is also common in approximately 50% of people above 60 years old.



Can diverticular disease be prevented?

Once formed, diverticula are permanent. No medical treatment has been found to prevent its complications. Diets high in fibre can help to increase stool bulk, prevent constipation and reduce the likelihood of diverticular forming or existing ones from worsening. Patients with diverticular disease often show minimal to no symptoms at all, and therefore do not require specific treatment.



What causes bleeding?

Diverticular bleeding occurs when the expanding diverticulum erodes into a blood vessel at the base of the diverticulum to cause the patient to pass red, dark, or maroon-coloured blood and clots. The patient may not have any abdominal pain before this.

Bleeding may be occasional or continuous (lasting several days). Patients who experience active bleeding will be advised hospitalisation, while patients with persistent or severe bleeding may require surgery to remove the affected colon.

What causes diverticulitis?

Diverticulitis occurs when there is a thinning and breakdown of the diverticula wall, caused by increased pressure within the colon. It may also be caused by hardened stool particles lodged within the diverticulum.

Symptoms will depend on the degree of inflammation.

Antibiotics can cure mild diverticulitis, but a liquid or low-fibre diet is advised during acute attacks of mild diverticulitis.

After an episode of diverticulitis, a colonoscopy will be performed to examine the whole colon to determine the severity and rule out the presence of polyps or cancer.

Surgery is sometimes advised for complicated diverticulitis or repeated diverticulitis.

Common symptoms

Up to 20% of patients with diverticular disease experience:

- Abdominal cramping
- Constipation and diarrhoea

More serious symptoms and complications include:

- A collection of pus in the abdominal cavity
- Bleeding into the colon
- Diverticulitis (a rupture or infection of the diverticulum)
- Erosion of the diverticula into the adjacent bladder that cause repeated urinary tract infections and gas
- Intestinal obstruction



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