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DIVERTICULAR DISEASE  
& THE GUT

WHITEPAPER



## DIVERTICULAR DISEASE

These conditions known as diverticular disease and diverticulitis are very common gastrointestinal disorders, which mainly affect the elderly. They are distinguished by the formation of small pockets in the lining of the large intestine.

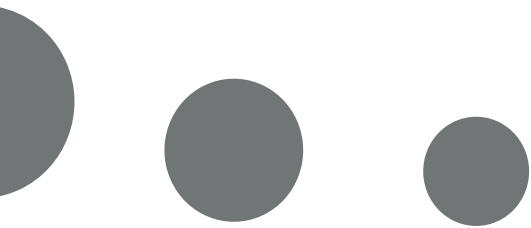
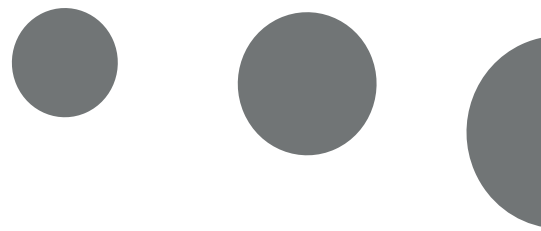
Both conditions are closely related and share common symptoms, although these symptoms are more likely to be severe in the case of diverticulitis (abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhoea etc)<sup>(125)</sup>.

Age, genetics and lifestyle are all common predispositions for the development of these conditions, however, the development of the both diseases are more likely if there is not enough fibre consumed in a diet. Therefore, the modification of a diet, a shift towards higher-fibre one, is a recommended approach to manage these conditions<sup>(125)</sup>.

The role of microbiota has been suspected in the development of diverticular disease. Patients with diverticular disease demonstrate reduced numbers of certain bacterial groups which are well known to have important anti-inflammatory effects (*Clostridium* cluster IV, *Clostridium* cluster IX, *Fusobacterium*, and *Lactobacillaceae*)<sup>(126)</sup>. Some of these bacteria, belonging to *Clostridium* cluster IV and *Fusobacterium*, have been reported to be also reduced in patients with IBS, another condition characterised by inflammation of the digestive system<sup>(123)</sup>. Importantly, bacteria of *Clostridium* cluster IX and *Fusobacterium* are known to produce propionate and butyrate, both SCFAs which are well known to have anti-inflammatory properties amongst other health benefits<sup>(29, 86)</sup>.

Although there are clear indications linking microbiota and diverticular disease, the exact role of the gut bacteria in this condition is still uncertain and, as such, is the subject of several current research studies.





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