

Preventing GI Disorders in Adults and the Elderly



Two digestive disorders that increase in risk as we age are diverticular disease and colon cancer. Certain risk factors, such as age or our family history, we have no control over. However, did you know that there are lifestyle changes that may help decrease the incidence?

Diverticular Disease

What the heck is diverticular disease? Although you may have never even heard of this condition, let us assure you it's very real. Diverticular disease is an umbrella term used to describes three (3) conditions: diverticulosis, diverticular bleeding, and diverticulitis.



Diverticulosis

is the presence of diverticula (plural), sac-like pouches found protruding from the wall of the large bowel.



Diverticular bleeding

occurs when these sac-like pouches rupture, causing bloody stools.



Diverticulitis

occurs when these sac-like pouches become infected or inflamed.

Prevention

There is good news; diverticular disease may be prevented!



Fibre Up!

Well, you know us, we love fibre! And now you know why! Increasing fibre in your diet along with drinking adequate amounts of water (reasonable goal could be 8 x 8oz/250ml a day) may help prevent diverticula from forming in the bowel. Canadian women need 25 grams of fibre per day and men need 38 grams of fibre per day; most are only getting about half that amount.



HYDRATE!

Fibre needs water! How much water is enough? The best way to measure your hydration levels is to monitor your urine. A dark yellow or brown colour means you're not getting enough water. If your pee is clear or very light yellow, you're on the right track!

Colon Cancer

Cancer. One of the scariest words to hear and the last thing anyone wants for themselves or a loved one. Colon Cancer is a preventable cancer if caught in the early stages. How do you help prevent colon cancer? Colon Cancer Screening, of course!



When Should I get Screened?

50 or earlier, if your risk profile suggests an earlier test. The best thing to do is to speak with your doctor.



What if they find something?

Most colon cancers arise from polyps. If detected early, polyps can be easily removed during a colonoscopy!



What can I expect?

Your doctor will walk you through all the details, explain what you can expect and how you can prepare for this procedure.