



## **SPECIALIST SURGEONS**

Practice No: 0509299

### **NEIL COMLEY**

MB ChB (UOFS) FCS (SA)

### **SHERIDAN SANTHIA**

MB ChB (Stell) FCS (SA) MMed (Stell)

### **JUAN GOUWS**

MB ChB(UFS) DA(SA) MSc(Edin) FCS(SA) MMed(UCT)

### **LANGA NQWENA**

MB ChB (UCT) MRCS (IRE) FCS (SA)

### **PIERRE MOUTON**

MB ChB(Stell) FCS (SA) MMed (Stell)

17 St Lukes Road, East London 5201

Email: [surgeons@elsurgeons.co.za](mailto:surgeons@elsurgeons.co.za)

Phone: (043) 743 4567/Fax No: (043) 722 6757

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## **DIVERTICULAR DISEASE & DIVERTICULITIS**

Diverticular disease is the general name for a common condition that causes small bulges (diverticula) or sacs to form in the wall of the large intestine (colon). Although these sacs can form anywhere in the colon, they are most common in the sigmoid (part of the large intestine closest to the rectum).

**DIVERTICULITIS:** An inflammatory condition of the colon thought to be caused by perforation of one of the sacs.

Several secondary complications can result from a diverticulitis attack. When this occurs, it is called complicated diverticulitis.

**DIVERTICULOSIS:** The presence of diverticula without associated complications or problems. The condition can lead to more serious issues including diverticulitis, perforation (the formation of the holes), stricture (narrowing of the colon that does not easily let stool pass), fistulas and bleeding.

**SYMPTOMS:** Most patients with diverticulosis have no symptoms or complications. Some patients with diverticulitis experience lower abdominal pain and a fever or they may have rectal bleeding. Having diarrhoea or constipation.

**CAUSES:** The most commonly accepted theory ties diverticulosis to high pressure within the colon. This pressure causes weak areas of the colon wall to bulge out and form sacs. A diet low in fibre and high in red meat may also play a role.

**TREATMENT:** It is advised to eat a diet high in fibre, fruits and vegetables and a limit of red meat.

**DIET AND LIFESTYLE:** Not eating enough fibre is thought to be linked to developing diverticular disease and diverticulitis.

Fibre helps to make your stool softer and larger so they put less pressure on the walls of your intestines.

Some other things that seem to increase your risk include:

- Smoking
- Being overweight/obese
- History of constipation
- Long term/regular use of painkillers i.e. anti-inflammatories