

Diverticulitis causes severe pain that sends 200,000 people to the hospital every year. The board-certified gastroenterologists at Pioneer GI Clinic have years of experience diagnosing and treating diverticulitis, offering individualized treatment that eases your pain and paves the way for a long-lasting recovery. If pain suddenly appears in your lower left abdomen, call the office in Anchorage, Alaska.

What is diverticulitis?

The wall of your large intestine (colon) has a muscular layer that lies between several other layers of tissues. When the muscle develops a weak spot, the inner layer can push out through that area and create a balloon-like sac.

The sac, called a diverticulum, protrudes out from the intestinal wall. If you have one or more of these, you have a condition called diverticulosis. Though diverticulosis can appear anywhere along your colon, the sacs most often develop on the lower left side.

Diverticulosis is a common condition that doesn't cause symptoms until the sac becomes infected and inflamed. That's when you have diverticulitis.

What symptoms develop due to diverticulitis?

Diverticulitis is notorious for causing extreme pain in the lower-left side of your abdomen. In addition to the pain, you may experience:

- Constipation or diarrhea
- Fever and chills
- Nausea and vomiting
- Tenderness when touching that area of your abdomen

Diverticulitis usually appears suddenly. Without treatment, it can cause complications.

What complications does diverticulitis cause?

Ongoing inflammation leads to serious problems such as:

Abscess

If pus collects around the inflamed sac (an abscess), it can spread into your abdomen and cause peritonitis. Peritonitis refers to inflammation and infection in the wall of your abdomen.

Fistula

As inflammation damages the surrounding tissues, it creates an abnormal tunnel (fistula) between the large intestine and a nearby organ such as your bladder.

Bowel perforation

If the weakened intestinal wall tears, the infection and waste from your colon leak into the abdominal cavity. This complication is a medical emergency.

Diverticular bleeding

Small blood vessels in the sac can break and bleed. You may have severe bleeding that needs emergency medical attention.

How is diverticulitis treated?

Pioneer GI Clinic develops personalized treatment based on the severity of your symptoms and any complications. You may only need to take oral medications and temporarily follow a liquid diet. This special diet reduces stress on your colon and gives the infection time to heal.

More severe symptoms may need intravenous antibiotics and nutrients. If you have recurrent diverticulitis or develop complications, you need surgery to repair the colon wall.

For pain and tenderness in your lower left abdomen, don't wait to seek help from the experienced team at Pioneer GI Clinic.