Zenker’s Diverticulum

What Is Zenker’s Diverticulum?

It is a pouch that forms in your pharynx, (an area just above your esophagus or swallowing tube). This happens when there is pressure on your pharynx and it balloons out. There is a common wall that separates the esophagus from the diverticulum pouch. Food can easily get trapped in the pouch, causing symptoms.

How Is It Treated?

Endoscopic repair: This is the most common method. Your surgeon passes an endoscope (a tube with a camera) down your throat. Using a stapler or a laser, the common wall is cut so that when you swallow food, it no longer can get trapped in the pouch.

- You may go home the same day or the day after surgery.
- If a laser is used, you may need to have a small feeding tube in your nose for up to 1 week after surgery.
- You may have a test done the day after your surgery to make sure there is no leaking of fluid outside of the swallowing tube (esophagus); this is called a leak study.
- If no leak is found, you will be allowed to start eating. Your doctor will tell you what type of diet to follow and for how long. Typically, your diet will be advanced from a full liquid diet (like water, coffee, shakes, creamed soup) to soft foods (like mashed potatoes, pasta, soups, pudding, scrambled eggs, yogurt and ice cream) over about two weeks. You can usually return to your normal diet the third week after surgery or after your first follow up visit.
**Open procedure:** The surgeon fixes the pouch through a small cut on the front of your neck.

- You need to stay in the hospital for 1-2 days.
- You may have a small feeding tube in your nose. This may stay in for 1 week to allow the surgery area to heal.
- If you have removable stitches, they would be taken out 1 week after surgery.
- You will have a test done the day after surgery called a leak study, to make sure there is no fluid leaking outside of the esophagus. This test is usually repeated again in 1 week and then the feeding tube is removed.
- Your doctor will tell you what type of diet to follow and for how long.

**CP myotomy:** The cricopharyngeal muscle (a muscle that helps push food down your esophagus and into your stomach) is cut. This lets food pass smoothly. It is done with either an open or an endoscopic method.

**What Will My Restrictions Be?**

- No strenuous activity for a week.
- No lifting more than 25 lbs for a week.
- If you have an open repair, you may shower 48 hrs after surgery.
- Please do not soak in a bathtub or hot tub until your stitches are out.
- Sleep at a 30° angle or on 2-3 extra pillows the first week.
- Avoid coughing hard or clearing your throat the first week.

**Will I Have Pain?**

You may notice:

- A sore throat.
- Pain in your ears.
- Pain at your incision site.

Your doctor will prescribe a narcotic pain medicine for you. You will also have a prescription for a stool softener because narcotics may cause constipation. Do not take Ibuprofen or aspirin for at least 1 week after surgery or until cleared by your surgeon or primary doctor.
When Do I Need To Call The Doctor?

- If you have signs of a wound infection (fever, redness, swelling, tenderness, pus like drainage)
- If you have a hard time breathing (go to ER or call 911)
- If you have chest, upper back or neck pain
- If you cough up or vomit blood
- If you have a fever over 101°F

Who Do I Call?

Please call the ENT Clinic (608) 263-6190 or toll free at 1-800-323-8942, weekdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

After hours and weekends, the paging operator answers the clinic number. Ask for the ENT resident on call. The resident will call you at your call back number.