

Urethral Diverticulum

WARWIKI

Patient Information · A small pocket off the urethra that collects urine

A urethral diverticulum is a small **pocket or sac** that forms off the urethra — the tube that carries urine out — almost always in women. A little urine can collect in the pocket, leading to dribbling, discomfort, infections, or pain with sex. It is often missed for years, but once recognized it is very treatable.

About This Condition

The classic clues are the “**three Ds**”:

- **Dribbling** — a little urine leaks just after you finish urinating
- **Dysuria** — burning or discomfort when urinating
- **Dyspareunia** — pain with sex

Other signs include **recurrent urinary infections**, urgency or frequency, or a tender lump felt in the front wall of the vagina that may release fluid when pressed.

What Causes It

It is thought to start when small glands around the urethra become **blocked and infected**, then rupture into the urethra, leaving a pocket that fills with urine. It is not cancer and is not caused by anything you did.

LEARN THE TERMS

Urethra

The tube that carries urine out of the body.

Diverticulum

A pocket or pouch that balloons off a hollow tube.

The “3 Ds”

Dribbling, dysuria (burning), and dyspareunia (pain with sex).

MRI

The best scan to map the pocket before surgery.

Diverticulectomy

Surgery to remove the pocket and repair the urethra.

Martius flap

A small tissue flap sometimes used to reinforce the repair.

Cystoscopy

A look inside the urethra and bladder with a thin camera.

DO I NEED SURGERY? Not always. A small pocket that causes no symptoms can simply be watched. But when it causes dribbling, infections, pain, or a bothersome lump, removing it (a diverticulectomy) is the definitive fix. Your surgeon will map it carefully first with an MRI.

How It's Diagnosed

- An exam — a tender lump in the front vaginal wall that may release fluid when pressed
- An **MRI**, which is the best way to show the pocket's size and shape
- Sometimes a **cystoscopy** to see the opening from inside

How It's Treated

- 1 **Watchful waiting** for a small, symptom-free pocket.
- 2 **Treat infections** first if present.
- 3 **Diverticulectomy** — surgery through the vagina to remove the pocket and carefully repair the urethra in layers, sometimes with a small tissue flap.
- 4 A **catheter** is left while it heals, and a **healing X-ray** is usually done before it comes out.

Good to Know

- The repair is delicate — expect a catheter for a couple of weeks afterward.
- Most people get excellent relief; occasionally a pocket can recur or new leakage appears, which can be addressed.
- Surgery is usually planned when any infection has settled.

Call your team if you have:

- A fever, chills, or worsening pelvic pain
- You **cannot urinate**, or the catheter stops draining (after surgery)
- Heavy bleeding, or new continuous leakage

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. A urethral diverticulum is a small pocket off the urethra — think of the "3 Ds" (dribbling, burning, pain with sex) and recurrent infections.
2. MRI maps it best. Small, symptom-free pockets can be watched; bothersome ones are removed with a careful repair.
3. Expect a catheter and a healing X-ray after surgery. Call for fever, inability to urinate, or new continuous leakage.