

Urethral Diverticulum

A urethral diverticulum is a condition that can cause genitourinary symptoms including urinary urgency, frequency, leakage of urine, discharge from the urethra and/or discomfort with intercourse. They can also be present without any symptoms. Surgery to remove these lesions can be performed for symptomatic patients.

What is urethral diverticulum?

A urethral diverticulum is an outpouching of urethral tissue into the surrounding area. When present some women may notice a small bump or bulge below the urethra, the opening where you urinate from. Overall, this is an uncommon condition that is typically found in people aged 30–50 years.

This can cause a variety of symptoms including the following:

- painful urination
- dribbling of urine
- painful intercourse
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- pelvic pain
- urinary leakage
- urinary urgency
- urinary frequency
- vaginal or urethral discharge (thick yellow or white drainage)
- vaginal bulge

Urethral diverticulae can be caused by recurrent infections, previous pelvic surgeries, and in very rare cases can be present at birth. These lesions may also be present without any symptoms.

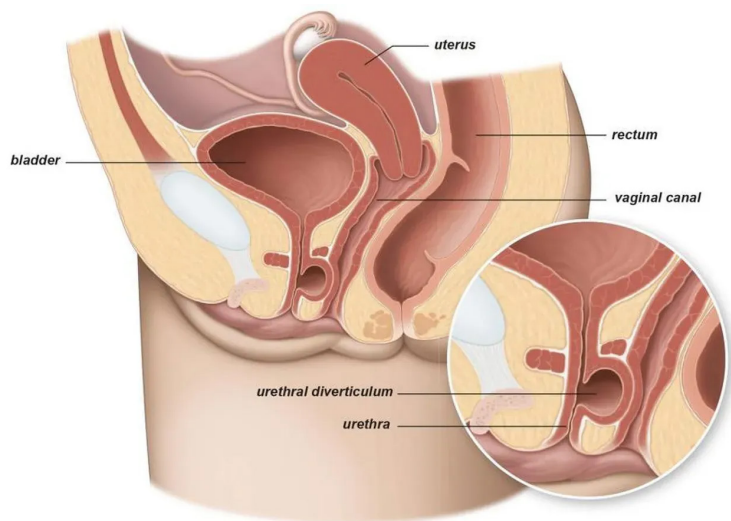


Photo credit: www.akronurogynecology.com/urethral-diverticulum

LEARN THE TERMS

Diverticulum: a small pouch or sac that bulges out from a hollow organ like the urethra

Genitourinary symptoms: a variety of symptoms that can affect the urinary and reproductive systems

Urethra: the tube that drains the bladder

Urinary frequency: urinating more often than usual

Urinary incontinence: involuntary loss of urine

Urethral Diverticulum

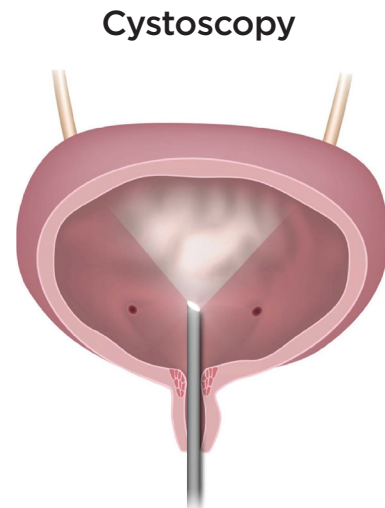
Diagnosis

Diagnosis often involves a pelvic exam by a health care provider and imaging (i.e., MRI, ultrasonography). You will be referred to a specialist, such as a urogynecologist or urologist, who may perform a [cystoscopy](#) to further examine the lesion.

Treatment

Treatment usually involves surgery. Your doctor may give you antibiotics before your surgery if there is concern for an active infection. After surgery your doctor may keep a bladder catheter in place to help with your recovery.

If there are no symptoms or concern for cancer, a urethral diverticulum can be closely watched and may not require surgery. Delay in diagnosis of urethral diverticulum and treatment can lead to recurrent urinary tract infections, stone formation, and more rarely, cancer.



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Three Takeaways

- 1. Urethral diverticulum can cause a variety of genitourinary symptoms.**
- 2. You may need imaging for a complete evaluation.**
- 3. Surgery to remove these lesions is the most common treatment when symptoms are bothersome.**

References:

- El-Nashar SA, Singh R, Bacon MM, Kim-Fine S, Occhino JA, Gebhart JB, Klingele CJ. Female Urethral Diverticulum: Presentation, Diagnosis, and Predictors of Outcomes After Surgery. *Female Pelvic Med Reconstr Surg*. 2016 Nov/Dec;22(6):447-452.
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