Common Findings on Physical Exam

Examination of a patient with symptomatic diverticular disease, such as acute diverticulitis, may reveal the following:

Rectovaginal exam – As you ask the patient to bear down, insert your index finger into the vagina and your middle finger into the rectum. Reexamine the uterus, the right and left adnexa, then palpate behind the cervix. A retroverted uterus may be palpable by the rectal finger. At this time, you may continue to examine the rectum by removing the index finger only. Rotate your hand clockwise and counterclockwise to examine all surfaces of the rectum, asking the patient to bare down in order to bring down any suspected lesions that may be out of reach. If fecal matter is present upon removal of your finger, test it for occult blood.

References: