Common Findings on Physical Exam

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

Vital Signs: Patients with acute inflammation will likely have fever and tachycardia. Those with severe diverticular bleeding may be hypotensive without complaints of pain/tenderness. Those with perforation may also be hypotensive.

- Hypoactive bowel sounds and abdominal rigidity are more likely if there is perforation, whereas high-pitched bowel sounds may be a sign of obstruction.
- Left lower quadrant tenderness, with varying degree of guarding and rebound tenderness.
  - Rebound tenderness refers to pain elicited on removal of pressure rather than the application of pressure on the abdomen. This causes aggravation of the parietal peritoneum via stretching, and may indicate peritonitis.
- Palpable mass on abdominal, pelvic, or rectal examination

References: