



Managing Gout Through Diet (and Medication)

Gout is an inflammatory arthritis of the joints, most often affecting the big toe. Flare ups can come on all of a sudden with severe pain, swelling and tenderness in the afflicted joint. Those of you with gout have probably woken up in the middle of the night with a hot, swollen joint with intolerable pain. Symptoms come and go without warning, though you can manage your symptoms and limit painful flare ups. If left untreated, gout can lead to damage of the joint. Contact your doctor if experiencing sudden intense pain.



Am I at an Increased Risk for Gout?

Uric acid in your bloodstream is usually dissolved in blood. High uric acid levels can cause the uric acid to crystallize in the joints, needling the surrounding tissue causing inflammation and pain. Men generally have higher uric acid levels than women, meaning they are at a higher risk for developing gout. If gout runs in your family, you are also more likely to develop gout. Specific medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease and obesity can lead to increased uric acid levels.

Taking certain medications like ACE inhibitors beta blockers can cause your uric acid levels to rise.

Last, but certainly not least, diet can increase uric acid levels increasing your risk of developing gout and cause flare ups. Red meats, shellfish and sweetened beverages are notorious for spiking uric acid levels. Worst of all is alcohol, especially beer!

Purines in Food

Purines are naturally occurring compounds needed for the body to produce energy. Purines are found in foods, and when broken down, produces uric acid. Specific foods are higher in purines.

Red Meat- beef, lamb and pork (especially bacon) are rich in purines. Organ meats like liver and sweetbreads can lead to increased uric acid levels too.



Seafood- anchovies, sardines, mussels, scallops cod and haddock are all high in purines. Crab, lobster, shrimp and oysters could be a better seafood choice as they contain moderate amounts of purines.



Sugar Sweetened Beverages- beverages sweetened with fructose (fruit sugar) are especially high in purines. Read nutrition facts labels and avoid drinks that contain high fructose corn syrup.

Alcohol- all alcohol is considered high in purines, though beer is especially high. Alcohol can also affect your kidney's ability to excrete uric acid through your urine, leading to a double whammy effect.



Manage My Gout?

If you believe you are experiencing gout like symptoms, seek out a medical professional for a proper diagnosis. While you can help manage your symptoms and minimize flare ups through a proper diet, this should be done in conjunction with medication to reduce the risk of further joint damage.

Dairy, specifically low-fat dairy, has been shown to reduce uric acid levels in blood. Choose 1% or skim milk, opt for fat-free Greek yogurt and replace full fat cheese with reduced-fat or fat-free versions.



Fruits and vegetables also contain purines, however there is no correlation between intake of higher purine content fruit and vegetables triggering gout to the same effect of meat products and fructose sweetened beverages. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help manage underlying conditions like diabetes and heart disease which are known to cause increase uric acid levels in the blood.



Whole grains have an increased fiber content compared to their refined counter parts (white bread, white pasta, white rice). Their increased fiber content can help with blood sugar control, which is especially important for people with gout.

During flare ups, meat is recommended to be limited. This makes plant-based proteins all the more important to incorporate into your diet. Lentils, beans, peas, nuts, seeds and ancient grains like quinoa, farro and amaranth are great high protein alternatives to turn too if you are trying to reduce your purine intake, while also maintaining adequate protein intake.

Source: [Gout - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)
[Purine-Restricted Diet Still Recommended for Gout?](#)