

About.com : Arthritis

Gout Diet: Foods To Eat

From Carol & Richard Eustice,
Your Guide to Arthritis.
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About.com Health's Disease and Condition content is reviewed by [Kate Grossman, MD](#)

What Should You Have In Your Shopping Cart To Help Prevent Gout Attacks?

What Is Gout?

Gout is one of the most painful types of arthritis, and accounts for 5 percent of all cases of arthritis. Gout is characterized by sudden, severe bouts of redness, swelling, warmth, pain, and inflammation in one or more joints. Most commonly the big toe is the initial joint involved, but other joints may be involved initially or become involved in recurring attacks of gout.

What Causes Gout?

Gout results from the deposit of needle-like uric acid crystals in the connective tissue, the joint space between two bones, or both. Uric acid is the end-product caused by the breakdown of purines.

Purines are naturally found in the body and are found in many foods. It is excess uric acid in the body which causes the formation of uric acid crystals. Excess uric acid (hyperuricemia) in the body can be caused by:

- an increase in production of uric acid by the body
- under-elimination of uric acid by the kidneys
- increased intake of foods high in purines

- [Gout Risk Factor Quiz](#)

The Stages of Gout

Gout can progress through four stages according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS):

- **Asymptomatic gout** - There is elevated uric acid levels in the blood but no other symptoms. Typically, at this stage no treatment is required.
- **Acute gouty arthritis** - Hyperuricemia causes deposit of uric acid crystals in the joint spaces. The intense symptoms of pain and inflammation are experienced. Early, acute attacks usually subside within 3-10 days even without treatment.
- **Interval gout** - The period between acute gout attacks when there are no symptoms and there is normal joint function.
- **Chronic tophaceous gout** - The most disabling stage of gout which occurs after many years, associated with permanent damage to the affected joints and sometimes the kidneys.
- [Is It Gout or Pseudogout?](#)

Gout Treatment

With proper treatment, people who have gout do not usually progress to the chronic tophaceous phase of gout. What is the *proper treatment of gout*? Medications can be prescribed to help control gout and there are lifestyle recommendations. People with gout are advised to:

- Avoid alcohol or drink alcohol in moderation
 - Drink plenty of water and other fluids
 - Maintain an ideal body weight
 - Lose weight if overweight but avoid fasting or quick weight loss schemes
 - Avoid eating foods high in purines
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- How To Treat Gout With Diet And Medication

What Should You Eat?

Dietary restrictions suggest what people should not eat, but *what should people eat*? What foods will help control gout attacks? The American Medical Association recommends the following dietary guidelines for people with gout, advising them to eat a diet:

- high in complex carbohydrates (fiber-rich whole grains, fruits, and vegetables)
- low in protein (15% of calories and sources should be soy, lean meats, or poultry)
- no more than 30% of calories in fat (with only 10% animal fats)

Recommended Foods To Eat

- Fresh cherries, strawberries, blueberries, and other red-blue berries
- Bananas
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Vegetables including kale, cabbage, parsley, green-leafy vegetables
- Foods high in bromelain (pineapple)
- Foods high in vitamin C (red cabbage, red bell peppers, tangerines, mandarins, oranges, potatoes)
- Drink fruit juices and purified water (8 glasses of water per day)
- Low-fat dairy products
- Complex carbohydrates (breads, cereals, pasta, rice, as well as aforementioned vegetables and fruits)
- Chocolate, cocoa
- Coffee, tea
- Carbonated beverages
- Essential fatty acids (tuna and salmon, flaxseed, nuts, seeds)
- Tofu, although a legume and made from soybeans, may be a better choice than meat

Foods considered moderately high in purines but which may not raise the risk of gout include: asparagus, cauliflower, mushrooms, peas, spinach, whole grain breads and cereals, chicken, duck, ham, turkey, kidney and lima beans. It is important to remember that purines are found in all protein foods. All sources of purines should not be eliminated.

More Reading:

- Gout: Avoiding Purine-Rich Foods
Along with specific prescribed medications, people with gout are usually advised to reduce their intake of purine-rich foods. This gout dietary recommendation begs the question, just what foods are purine-rich?

- Gout Diet: Foods To Avoid

It is well known that a person with gout should avoid purine-rich foods. What should they eat though? What foods will lower the risk of another gout attack?

- Gout Prevention And Treatment

Options for preventing and treating gout.

Related Resources

- Gout Diet
- The Gout Diet Quiz
- Gout: Test Your Knowledge
- The Gout Guide: Free E-Course Newsletter

Gout is one of the most painful types of arthritis. Gout attacks can be controlled or prevented by lifestyle changes and the use of certain medications. Better understanding will enhance your ability to manage the condition. Learn more about gout with our free e-course newsletter.

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