

Patient information

Gout and diet

Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis. It is caused by having too much of the chemical “uric acid” in your bloodstream. Uric acid is the waste product created when the body breaks down a type of protein called purines. Gout is often associated with other conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cardiovascular disease

Gout can be caused by:

- The kidneys not being able to remove uric acid effectively e.g. in chronic kidney disease
- Genetic predisposition
- Diet and lifestyle increasing the amount of uric acid that you produce

If levels of uric acid in the body are high for prolonged periods, crystals can start to form in or around your joints resulting in inflammation, swelling, and severe attacks of pain. Your eating habits can play an important role in managing gout and reducing the likelihood of suffering further gout attacks. If you have any related conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol, and obesity), it is important to manage these as well to prevent the incidence of gout.

Protein

Protein is an essential component of the diet and high protein intake alone is not associated with gout. However, foods that are high in protein tend to be high in purines as well. Try to opt for fresh cuts of meat or opt for vegetable-based protein, dairy and eggs which are moderate- to low-purine foods.

General guidelines

- Alcohol intake will increase the likelihood of gout, especially beer and spirits
- Low-fat dairy products and coffee have been found to be protective
- Drinking sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. fizzy drinks) regularly can increase your risk of gout. Diet-fizzy drinks (sugar free) do not increase your risk.

- Aim to stop smoking
- Stay well hydrated
- Aim to achieve weight loss, if overweight

Which foods to limit?

Avoid	Limit	Can have regularly
Organ meats (offal) high in purines, e.g. liver, kidney, heart, sweetbreads	Serving sizes of: - beef, lamb, pork - seafood with high purine content, e.g. sardines, shellfish (crab, mussels, shrimp) anchovies, fish roe, mackerel, sprats, whitebait	Low-fat or non-fat dairy products (milk, cheese, yoghurt)
High fructose corn syrup-sweetened fizzy drinks or other beverages / foods	Game (pheasant, rabbit, venison)	Vegetables <i>(purine-rich vegetables do not need to be avoided)</i>
Alcohol >2 units/day for men >1 unit/day for women	Serving of naturally sweetened fruit juice	Eggs
Any alcohol during periods of frequent gout attacks or poorly controlled advanced gout	Table sugar, sweetened beverages and desserts	Cereals / grains / starches (e.g. bread, pasta, rice, potatoes)
	Table salt, sauces, gravies	
	Meat- and yeast extracts (marmite, Bovril)	
	Quorn	
	Alcohol, especially beer, but also wine and spirits	

Achieving a healthy weight

Weight loss has been found to be most effective in lowering uric acid, in people that have excess weight to lose. Steady, sustainable weight loss is advised, aiming to lose fat mass rather than muscle mass. The use of fad- or crash diets as well as ketosis (“keto diet”) and fasting is strongly discouraged, as they may increase uric acid levels and induce gout attacks.

Eating a balanced diet is important. This can help to manage weight and to provide all the necessary nutrients needed for maintaining good health. A variety of foods from the four main food groups should be eaten every day, including carbohydrates, protein, fruits and vegetables, and dairy products.

Please see below some top tips for following a healthy balanced diet:

- **Plenty of fruit and vegetables:** Have at least 5-a-day, as fruit and vegetables provide fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients essential for good health.
- **Include a starchy carbohydrate with each meal** (bread, pasta, rice, cereals, and potatoes) and including the skin on potatoes and fruit to ensure you get the vitamins, minerals and fibre you need.
- **Moderate amounts of meat, fish and alternatives:** Avoid eating large portions of protein foods that are high in purines. Keep the portion of meat to the size of the palm of your hand and choose fresh cuts of meat if possible.
- **Moderate amounts of dairy products:** The recommended amount is three portions of low-fat dairy products daily e.g. a 200ml glass of milk, a 125g pot of yoghurt and a 30g (matchbox-sized) portion of hard cheese.
- **Limit or avoid alcohol intake:** Aim to keep within the recommended national limit of maximum 14 units per week for men and women. Keep in mind that beer especially tends to trigger gout flares.
- **Keep well hydrated:** Aim for at least 2 litres of (sugar-free) fluid per day, unless guided otherwise by a healthcare professional.

More information about Gout can be found on the UK Gout Society website:

www.ukgoutsociety.org

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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