

First line advice: For Patients with Gout

This information sheet has been provided to give you basic initial information about what to do if you are suffering from Gout. If you need more detailed advice and support, please ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian.

Gout is caused by an excess of uric acid (urate) which can inflame your joints causing severe pain and swelling. You can help reduce symptoms by choosing a healthy diet, with regular meals, a good fluid intake (water or non-alcoholic drinks) and limiting foods that have a high purine content. Uric acid is formed from the purines that are found in foods.

The following are the first steps of diet and lifestyle changes to improve your symptoms:

Eat regular meals – Avoid large meals, as well as missing meals. Fasting for short periods may induce an attack of gout. Aim for 3 small meals a day.

Limit high Purine Foods -

- Meats: Liver, veal, offal (brain, heart, sweetbreads) turkey and venison, goose
- Meat extract: Bovril, Oxo, rich gravies
- Sea food: anchovies, herring, mackerel, sardines, fish roes, crab, shrimps, sprats, whitebait, fish, roes, mussel and scallops
- Vegetables: asparagus, cauliflower, mushrooms, spinach, peas
- Lentils: kidney beans, lima beans, soya beans
- Yeast extract e.g. Marmite and beer

Control your weight – Being overweight is associated with increased levels of urate in the body. Losing weight will significantly reduce urate levels, but avoid crash dieting as this causes cells in the body to break down leading to a rapid rise in uric acid levels. Aim to reduce intake of energy dense foods such as fried foods, fatty meats, butter and oils.

Drink plenty of Fluids - You should drink approximately 1.5 litres (6-8 glasses) a day of water, non-alcoholic drinks, including tea and coffee. Drink more when you are exercising or during hot weather.

Avoid excessive intakes of alcohol drinks - Not more than 2-3 units per day for men and women, with alcohol-free days in between. Beer, port and stout contain high levels of purine.

Increase your levels of activity - Try to get plenty of exercise. This will help to reduce stress on weight bearing joints and also allow you to maintain a healthy

weight. Aim for 30 mins activity at least 5 times a week.

For Further information

British Dietetic Association web: www.bda.co.uk

UK Gout Society web: www.ukgoutsociety.org

This information sheet was produced by the Community Dietitians and is intended to be given by a health professional only. It is not a substitute for proper medical diagnosis or dietary advice given by a Registered Dietitian. The advice is not appropriate for certain medical conditions such as diets that require the exclusion or restriction of particular foods. If in doubt, please check with your medical practitioner.

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