

Healthy Eating Guide for Gout

What is Gout?

Gout is a painful form of arthritis (joint inflammation) caused by high uric acid levels in the blood (hyperuricemia).

Uric acid commonly forms crystals in the joints of the toes, ankles, knees and wrists. Symptoms of gout flares include pain, swelling, redness and/or feels warm to touch.



Uric acid is formed when the body breaks down purine. Purine is naturally found in our bodies (70%) and in foods we consume (30%). However, if our body makes too much uric acid or can't get rid of it well, this results in hyperuricemia leading to gout. Repeated gout attacks can damage the joints and restrict mobility. Uric acid crystals can build up in the urinary tract, leading to kidney stones and/or kidney failure.



Gout management involves dietary and lifestyle modifications. Together with gout medication, this can help reduce the frequency and severity of gout attacks.

Dietary and Lifestyle Strategies

1. Follow a healthy, balanced diet

My Healthy Plate is a visual guide that can be used by everyone!
Follow the Quarter, Quarter, Half guide.



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- Fill Quarter plate with wholegrains
- Fill Quarter plate with lean sources of protein. Limit excessive consumption of meat and certain seafood that is high in purine (refer to page 3).
- Fill Half plate with fruit and vegetables

2. Maintain a healthy body weight

- Aim to achieve a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 18.5 - 22.9 kg/m²
- Aim for gradual weight loss if you are overweight or obese
- Avoid drastic weight loss measures such as fasting, very low calorie or high protein diets. These types of diets are more likely to cause gout or uric acid kidney stones.



$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$$

Nutritional Status	BMI (kg/m ²)
Underweight	< 18.5
Normal Range	18.5 - 22.9
Overweight	23.0 - 27.4
Obese I	27.5 - 32.4
Obese II	≥ 32.5

3. Limit high purine foods and excessive consumption of certain meats and seafood

Examples of high purine foods include:

- Internal organs e.g. liver, kidney, heart, lungs and intestines such as those in kway chap and pig organ soup



- Certain types of shellfish and fish e.g. herring, mackerel (batang, saba fish, ikan tenggiri), sardines, scallops, mussels, anchovies (ikan bilis)



- Meat gravies and soups e.g. double boiled soup, bak kut teh, bone broths or soups using stock cubes

- Meat and yeast extracts



Purines are also found in asparagus, cauliflower, spinach, mushrooms, green peas, beans and soy products. However, these are unlikely to cause gout flares.



4. Limit high fructose intake such as sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juices

- Fructose increases the production of uric acid, which increases the risk of gout flares



- Drinking too much of these beverages can make you gain weight. It is better to choose water or drinks without sugar.

5. Abstain or limit alcohol intake

- Alcohol slows down the removal of uric acid by the kidneys
- Beer is also high in purine, which breaks down into uric acid leading to gout flares
- If you want to drink, limit to 2 standard drinks for men and 1 standard drink for women
- During an acute gout flare, it is recommended to avoid alcohol completely

1 Standard Drink = 10g Alcohol



330ml Beer



100ml Wine



30ml Spirits

6. Adequate hydration

- The body removes uric acid through urine
- Drink 2-3 litres of fluids daily, unless your doctor tells you to limit your fluid intake
- You should space out your fluid intake throughout the day



Contributed by Nutrition & Dietetics Service, Allied Health Services

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