

NUTRITION IN GOUT

WHAT IS GOUT?

Gout is an inflammation of joints in which small crystals form inside and around the joints, causing sudden attacks of severe pain and swelling.

It occurs due to excessive presence of uric acid in the blood, which may be due to a metabolic or blood disorder, improper diet or because of kidney or thyroid disease.

WHO IS AT RISK OF DEVELOPING GOUT?

Middle aged men and women are more likely to develop gout, than children or young adults. Men between the ages of 40 to 50 are most susceptible to gout.

Besides age and gender, other risk factors of gout include:

- Obesity
- Family history of gout
- Certain medicines such as baby aspirin, some diuretics and anti-transplant rejection medicine
- Chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, hypothyroidism or renal insufficiency
- Excessive consumption of purine-rich foods such as seafood, organ meat, and alcohol.

WHAT ARE PURINES?

Purines are naturally occurring chemicals, which produce uric acid. Purines are also found in certain foods and drinks (especially alcohol) which are not only a purine source, but may also inhibit clearing of uric acid from kidneys.

NUTRITION AND GOUT

Research shows that dietary patterns influence the risk of developing gout. Increased risk is associated with higher consumption of meat and seafood, but not with higher consumption of animal (milk, eggs, cheese) and vegetable protein. The cornerstone of nutrition management is a balanced meal plan that is limited in animal foods and is either alcohol-free or limited within patient tolerance and physician approval.

HOW TO BALANCE DIET FOR GOUT

The general recommendations for a gout diet mostly consists of foods suggested in a healthy diet.

- Fruits, whole grains and vegetables including those containing purines like asparagus, cauliflower spinach, mushrooms, green peas beans and lentils should be added to the diet.
- Low-fat/fat-free dairy items, eggs, nuts can be taken as they are low in purines.
- Fluid intake should be high, at around 8-12 glasses a day, with at least half of them water. High water consumption has been associated with fewer gout attacks.
- Things to avoid include: high fat content meat gravies and sauces, processed meat, red meat, crabs, shrimps, anchovies, fish roes, herring, sardines, sprats, whitebait and organ meats (liver and kidney).



References:

- [Manual of Dietetic Practice by Briony Thomas, 3rd Ed.
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