The Benefits of Journaling With Gout

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Journaling With Gout

If you are a gout sufferer, you should consider keeping a journal. Journaling is about being accountable to yourself; it's empowering because a journal helps you better understand your condition, make changes and live better, healthier. It is important, however, to know the right way to use it and what to write in it.

What to Write Down in Your Journal

It's important to keep track of your diet for two reasons. High purine foods are increasing the uric acid levels in your body and can aggravate your symptoms. You also have to maintain a healthy weight, because extra pounds can increase your uric acid levels. It's easy to eat and not think too much about it, but when you write down on the paper you may notice you eat more than you should, and foods that aren't good for you. For best results, record daily in your journal the following:

- **Every single meal or snack you eat every day.** Pay attention to the calories your consume and the foods that are high in purine. If you are not sure about how many calories a certain food has, you can check the USDA Nutrient Database. Regarding the purine content, you can review the list of allowed foods (which are low in purine) and the foods you should limit or avoid (because they have moderate or high content of purines).
- **Write down where and when you eat.** This is particularly helpful if you need to lose weight because you may notice late night snacks, eating at your desk while working or other unhealthy habits that don't allow you to keep the optimal weight. You may also want to write down how are you feeling when you eat, as emotional eating can also make you eat more and choose comfort foods such as ice cream or pizza.

- **What you drink.** Include in your journal the amount of water your drink, because dehydration impairs the kidney's ability to get rid of the extra uric acid. Alcoholic beverages and fructose beverages should be avoided. If you consume them you should write it down.
- **Exercise**. Record your activity levels and exercise, it will help you stick to fitness plan. Exercise helps you burn calories, keep your joints mobile and your entire body healthier.
- **Sleep patterns.** Write down about how you sleep and how you wake up in the morning. As much as your body needs activity, it also needs rest, too.
- **List the medication you are taking.** Include the list of gout medication, as well as any other meds you take. If you notice a flare-up that may be linked with the meds you take, talk to your doctor and find alternative options (some drugs that can cause flare-ups include diuretics, beta blockers, cyclosporine and even aspirin)
- **List any form of stress you may experience.** From emotional stress to physical stress (i.e. a surgery)

What To Do With Your Notes

If you experience a gout attack, look at your journal and see if you can find the trigger - it could be a high purine

meal, alcoholic drinks, a new medication you received, or excessive stress. If you want to lose weight, keep track of your weight on a weekly basis as well.