Finding an App That Really Works for Gout Management

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Helpful Apps for People With Gout

Managing a chronic disease brings a load of challenges, but some smart technology can really cut down on time and confusion. The key is to find an app that will simplify your gout management, not complicate it.

Your gout diet is crucial — you'll want to track it closely — and your gout pain deserves some attention, too. Luckily, there are plenty of apps that address both of these major issues.

But new apps come out every day, and while some are clearly helpful, others can make things pretty confusing. Which one do you start with? Take a look at some of the most popular apps for gout, and some that might be over-hyped, before you make your choice.

Diet and Weight Loss Apps

You probably know that a diet low in purines will keep uric acid from building up and causing pain, and maintaining a healthy weight is crucial for long-term management. In turn, both diet and weight loss apps can play a part in your gout plan.

There are hundreds, maybe thousands, of diet apps out there — it's one area that appeals to almost everyone. The best diet apps for gout sufferers will have a heft database of food information, and include some sort of purine detector.

Gout-specific apps are appealing, but a good, all-around diet app can be just as useful, once you're familiar with your "good" and "bad" foods.

Purine and Uric Acid List (iPhone, iPad)

This has been a go-to gout diet app for a few years now — a fact that might be working against it. Although it has the specific information you need (the amount of purines in a given ingredient, and whether that marks it as high or low risk), this app definitely has its limits.

Pros:

- Clearly states the purine level of more than 200 types of foods
- Nice images
- Ability to bookmark foods for easy future reference

Cons:

- Food list isn't updated

- Some technical glitches with the search form
- Limited usefulness

MyFitnessPal (iPhone, iPad, Android)

This is a fantastic, well-rounded alternative to a gout-specific app. A health and fitness heavyweight, MyFitnessPal can do it all, and without overloading your screen with stuff you don't want.

Pros:

- One of the largest food databases among mobile apps
- Easy to log meals, whether at home or at a restaurant
- Tracks exercise well

Cons:

- General nutritional info rather than gout-specific info
- Big social community is supportive, but may be intimidating at first

SparkPeople (Android)

This fitness app boasts a really enticing layout, and it connects to a network of other health and lifestyle sites. The best part? It keeps all your nutrition and fitness info right there in front of you, making it easy to stay on top of food, workouts and weight loss.

Pros:

- A complete view of your fitness, nutrition, and health improvements in one place
- Lots of linked resources for health and wellness
- A barcode scanner to decode nutrition info in packaged food
- Very user friendly, and a favorite among those looking to lose weight

Cons:

- A couple of bugs, but not much else!

Next page: apps for pain and symptom management.

Pain and Symptom Management Apps

A good gout app doesn't have to be specific and limited, especially when it comes to pain tracking. You'll want something that's customizable, something that lets you get specific about the onset and treatment of your pain. You'll know when to visit your doctor, and learn how to minimize your pain in the future.

My Pain Diary (iPhone, iPad)

This app is all about describing and recording your pain, something your doctor is sure to appreciate at your next visit. Since My Pain Diary was created by a chronic pain patient, the features are all relevant and well-designed for pain sufferers.

Pros:

- Interactive graphs and doctors reports make more accurate and quick reporting
- Color-coded calendar to see your progress immediately, and spot patterns

- Unlimited tracking

Cons:

- Lacks an area to record successful vs. unsuccessful treatments

CatchMyPain (Android)

A straightforward way to track your pain, record your symptoms, and relay the info to your doctor. You can create color drawings of your pain — where it's located, and its intensity — which can help you describe it more accurately.

Pros:

- User friendly
- Simple to map pain clearly, all over the body
- Easy to add your own notes for specific records

Cons:

- Long form to fill out to get started
- Free version lacks some very helpful details

Since it's very image-based, CatchMyPain is best for visual thinkers — those who like to use visual cues like color, shapes and charts.

Avoiding Bad Apps

Apps are what you make of them, and they're not all created equal. Some apps have too many steps to follow, or too much info to navigate through — you'll quickly tire of wandering around the site. Other apps offer advice that's not applicable to all patients; in the worst cases, it's downright wrong.

The Gout Diet Foods app has made a poor impression: it has a limited list of foods, and according to user reviews, many of the suggestions go against doctors' orders. The Gout Guard app, though not as inadequate as Gout Diet Foods, also falls short in depth of info and ingredient list.

Avoid a regrettable purchase with a thoughtful approach. Before you buy any app to help you with your gout management, take a moment to consider how well it will work for you by:

- **Reading reviews.** Take a few moments to consider the testimonials; most people review based on their personal experience, but what they expect and enjoy in an app could differ from what you consider to be important.
- **Checking their facts.** It's easy to take these "professional" apps for granted, but they're not always as medically-sound as they seem. Different sorts of people create apps — some are medical professionals, and some are not.
- **Take advantage of any intro guides the app might offer.** Check their facts against reputable references, like medically-reviewed articles, well-sourced websites and your doctor's advice.
- **Defining your health management personality.** Everyone approaches their health and lifestyle a bit differently, and a lot will depend on your particular personality, level of focus and energy.
- **If you're a visual learner, you might respond better to colorful images, graphs, and charts.** Love making lists? Pick an app that favors writing or itemizing. Look around and try a few different apps before committing to one simply because it's "the best."

Keep It Simple

Technology can be useful, but then again, it can tangle your priorities and interfere with your action plan. Remember any improvement in your health ultimately rests on your behavior, not a flashy app that tells you what to do and where you went wrong.

Take responsibility for your health, and be confident! You definitely have the ability to control your gout, and with the help of some good mobile resources, you can tap into that strength and willpower right away.