Prevent Gout Flares by Avoiding These Foods and Beverages

by MARLENE WALLACE

Preventing Onset of Gout

Gout is one form of arthritis that has been long associated with diet. Studies suggest that eating excess amounts of certain foods may trigger this form of arthritis. These foods include seafood, meat, aged cheeses, and alcohol. Several dietary restrictions have been used to treat gout, and many of these have failed. Now, let's take a look at preventing the onset of gout.

New treatments for gout are being introduced in the form of medications, which will lessen the dietary reductions. Even though new medications are being introduced into the arthritis world, healthy eating is still important to reduce gout and other forms of arthritis. A healthier diet will keep chronic illnesses at bay, giving you more energy and zest for life.

The Role of Uric Acid and Purines

High levels of uric acid form crystals in the bloodstream, and these crystals gather around the joints, causing gout. Purines are a naturally occurring organic compound in the body. When these purines are broken down, the body will produce uric acid. Eating certain foods such as herring, asparagus, mushrooms, and organ meats will also enhance the production of purines.

A good healthy eating plan will help control the amount and production of uric acid, plus eliminate this substance from the body. This reduces gout attacks on the body. With a healthy eating plan, you will notice fewer gout attacks. The eating plan isn't a treatment as of yet, but studies show a promising effect from eating right and doing certain exercises.

To control gout, you should avoid eating food high in purines to control the body's production of uric acid. Meats (mostly organs) and alcohol (especially beer) are two types of foods to eat at a minimum or to restrict completely in your healthy eating plan. The healthy eating plan also helps control obesity and weight gain, as being overweight can trigger episodes of this form of arthritis.

Water (nature's necessity) is also a gout sufferer’s necessity. Water helps to reduce uric acid by flushing the substance out of the body. When trying to eat healthy for “gout's” sake, remember not to overindulge in protein weight-loss diets. These may cause hyperuricemia, which is the product of too much uric acid.

Foods and Beverages to Avoid

- **Alcohol** – Drinking in moderation would be best if you can't quit, but avoiding this beverage would be the healthiest route to take when diagnosed with gout. Alcohol, especially beer, interferes with the uric acid in the body. The alcohol keeps the uric acid from leaving the body. When having attacks of gout, do not drink beer or any form of alcohol at all. However, you may drink one or two 4-6 ounces of wine daily when not experiencing symptoms.

- **Meat/Fish/Poultry** – Purine production in the body is high from animal proteins. Gout patients must avoid or limit foods high in protein to reduce the chances of gout attacks. Foods to limit or avoid include beef tongue, heart, liver, pork, lamb, anchovies and seafood, such as tuna, lobster, shrimp, mackerel, scallops and herring. Limit all of these to around 5 ounces daily.
- **Sweets** – Unfortunately, this list includes sweets. For some, it's not hard to avoid the succulent taste of sugary products, but for others, it is extremely difficult. The sugar to avoid is fructose because it is the only carbohydrate known thus far to increase uric acid. Of course, fructose is in many commercial foods, such as corn syrup found in juice, soda, some cereals, canned foods, and so much more.
- **Fats** – Fat leads to weight gain, and weight gain leads to gout. Foods high in fat, especially saturated fat, don't allow the elimination of uric acid from the body, so it's a good option to avoid.