Summer Grilling and Backyard Parties Without Gout Pain

by BRENDA VANTA

Barbecues and Gout

Barbecues are some of the most enjoyable activities in the summer. You get to socialize with family and friends, eat tasty food and relax in the backyard. However, if you suffer from gout, you need to plan these parties a little bit in advance to avoid well-known triggers of this condition: high amounts of red meat, alcohol or spending too much time on your feet. Here are a few tips to consider:

1. Keep an Eye on the Food

Foods can trigger a painful episode, especially those that are rich in purines (substances that promote the formation of uric acid crystals). For example, red meat, chicken, organ meats, beans (especially lentils), asparagus, brewer's yeast, mushrooms, spinach, seafood and fish, all contain enough purines to cause a gouty attack.

Choose vegetarian alternatives instead of meat products, because they contain rice, vegetables, nuts and tofu, which are all low in purines. All major grocery stores now carry a variety of vegetarian products: sausages, veggie hot dogs, veggie ground beef; in many cases, they taste great and close to the meat products. Other foods that should be in your diet include eggs, pasta, peanut butter, cheese and other dairy products, fruits(especially berries), vegetables, olives and sauerkraut. If you choose to consume chicken or turkey, remove the skin and have it boiled or baked, rather than barbecued. Dark chocolate and cacao are also low in purines.

2. Stay Away from Alcohol

You can increase the chance of developing gout by 25% just by drinking two-to-four beers a week, and the risk is much higher if you drink two beers a day. Choose non-alcoholic fruit punches when you go to the barbecue instead. Drink plenty of water, since gout symptoms can improve if you are well-hydrated. Increasing your liquid intake to at least ten glasses a day is important because fluids promote the elimination of uric acid by helping the kidneys in the process of filtering and eliminating waste products.

You can also enjoy a few coffees every day and an iced coffee would be a great drink for a barbecue party. Coffee (but not energy drinks with caffeine) is beneficial for gout. A 2007 study involving 14,000 subjects found that drinking coffee daily is associated with decreased levels of uric acid. A green tea latte is also a good option.

3. Avoid Fatigue and Too Much Standing

If you are the host of the barbecue, make sure you plan the party well in advance, so you don't get tired and overwhelmed. Go to the grocery store a few days before and get help from family and friends to get everything ready for the barbecue. Avoid standing on your feet for a long time, but rather use a bar stool or chairs while cooking and socializing. It is perfectly fine to use paper or plastic cups, plates, forks and knives for a barbecue party. This way, it will be easier for you to clean up after the party.