I’ve Been Diagnosed With Gout, Now What?

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What Do I Do After I Receive a Gout Diagnosis?

Gout is something I have been living with for over 15 years now. It’s one of the most excruciatingly painful conditions to have, sometimes, even more painful than childbirth.

Gout certainly is no walk in the park, but I have learned to cope with it by changing my habits and lifestyle choices, and researching more about the condition so I can share what I have learned to others who suffer the same thing.

Coping With a Gout Diagnosis

The first time I learned that I had gout, I was shocked. I was so sure my doctor just made a mistake. I mean, I couldn’t belong to the five percent of people who suffered from gout, and I refused to accept the diagnosis. So I went to another doctor to verify.

That’s when reality hit me. I *DID* have gout and had to live with it for the rest of my life along with taking medications that my doctor prescribed to me, Colchicine and Allopurinol.

Not long after my gout diagnosis, the bathroom became my new best friend–Colchicine was giving me diarrhea a few times a day. So I went back to my doctor who told me to just stick to 200 mg of Allopurinol a day.

In the beginning, I was hardheaded and went against my doctor’s advice experimenting with my prescription drug dosage. I would buy pill cutters to slice my Allopurinol by half cutting down the dosage to 50mg. I even went as far as skipping my pills completely thinking I had it all under control.

The consequence would come back to me later in the form of more gout attacks.

I remember my wife yelling at me, “You don’t take your pills," "What are you, your own doctor?" "You like to suffer like that?" and "Spiro, I can’t see you like this!”

As a young person then suffering from gout, it affected my emotions deeply. Walking with a cane and limping helplessly, I had to explain to my family and friends what my condition was. Worse is when your peers tell you “You got rich man’s disease Spiro, cut the burgers and soda!”

Making Lifestyle Changes to Prevent Gout Attacks

I knew my lifestyle was part of the reason why I was suffering terribly from this condition. When I had my very first gout attack, I was 5’11 and 50 pounds overweight.

I had little disregard for my diet, eating Big Macs and fries, drinking soda and adding tons of sugar to my coffee.

Some nights, I would retire home after drinking lots of mixed alcoholic drinks only to be awoken later by a crippling gout attack.

I learned from then on that alcohol was one of my triggers along with sugar. Even just having a couple of drinks caused me to have a harrowing gout attack.

I wasn't binge drinking, getting hammered, or anything like that. I usually had two to four days of having a couple of beers then a glass of wine the next day. But then, like a perfect accountant, my body would ask my due for what I did by giving me a gout attack.

Okay, maybe not. I was giving myself a gout attack with my poor diet choices. I was also consuming way more (9 teaspoons of sugar!) than the recommended dietary intake for men. High fructose corn syrup, the sugar found in soft drinks and alcohol, just happens to be one of the worst things to consume when you have gout!

Learn About Your Condition

As I was learning about my gout triggers, I was also speaking to doctors and did lots of research about gout. I knew I couldn't just rely on medicine alone and had to make drastic lifestyle changes.

It's incredible how much the pain in a gout attack can motivate you to change your bad habits. I couldn't stand the thought of experiencing another attack again and I was genuinely motivated to change.

I'm going to be honest, changing my old habits was hard–*really* hard. I failed to follow many times but the more I tried, the more my focus and discipline grew.

Since getting rid of my old habits and adopting healthy, new ones, I've only had to take 100mg of allopurinol a day. As a result of following a strict diet and keeping a close eye on triggers, my uric acid levels improved tremendously.

I know my solution won't work for all gout sufferers. What may trigger an attack in one sufferer may not affect another. I did find one common denominator among other sufferers, and that is alcohol, sugar and high fructose corn syrup.

Understanding Kidney Problems With Gout

HFCS damages the kidneys very badly and as what any learned gout sufferer will tell you, kidney problems are very closely related to gout.

Gout sufferers are likely to get kidney disease while those with kidney disease are likely to suffer from gout. Our kidneys normally eliminate uric acid, but when there's too much of it, the kidney starts to deteriorate in function. Elevated uric acid levels also lead to painful gout flares.

Therefore, it's important to reduce your risk for both. If you already suffer from one, it's best that you do your best to maintain a healthy serum uric acid level below 6.0 mg/dL.

The Bottom Line...

I'm no expert in gout, but I do my best to know more about the condition, doing research and analyzing my years of experience living with it. I encourage you to do the same.

Experiment and see what foods trigger your gout, and see what medications your body responds to best. Remember, we are all different and not one remedy will work best for everyone.

In the end, only you are in control of your gut. You don't have to make drastic changes immediately. You can start with simple steps like drinking water regularly to flush the kidneys and remove uric acid from the

bloodstream.

Exercise, maintain a healthy weight and avoid trigger foods. Practice it day by day, month by month, and year by year. Soon enough, you’ll enjoy living a healthy life as if this disorder never existed at all!