Foods That Can Help Ease Gout Flares and Symptoms

by SPIRO KOULOURIS

Foods to Eat with Gout

If you have gout, chances are you already know you have to maintain a low-purine diet. However, it doesn't have to stop there. There are actually certain foods, regardless of their purine content, that are not only healthy but may also help lessen your gout symptoms. And, contrary to what you might think, there are actually plenty of good options for foods to eat with gout!

Foods and Drinks That Can Benefit Those with Gout

Fruits: most fruits are good because they are high in fiber, which aids digestion. Fiber helps to regularly eliminate toxins from your body, including uric acid! The fiber in fruit also makes you feel full longer, preventing you from binging on unhealthy foods.

If you want total relief from gout, there are specific fruits you should be looking for. Focus on fruits that are rich in vitamin C and antioxidants. There's numerous studies already showing that vitamin C can help reduce uric acid by lowering its concentration in the body. So, go ahead and indulge in some oranges, cherries, berries and grapefruit.

You may also eat other fruits such as papayas, apples, bananas, grapes and cantaloupes. These fruits contain vitamins and minerals including potassium, vitamin B and bromelain, which help with the gout condition. Consume fruits in their most natural form to get the most benefits.

Vegetables: vegetables in your diet are always good. However, they were not made equal. Some can work very well in relieving gout symptoms. This includes vegetables such as cabbage, beets, kai-lan, squash and bell peppers. Certain vegetables including spinach, cauliflower, asparagus and mushrooms may contain moderate purines, but you don't have to avoid them completely as they are rich in nutrients that can help fight symptoms of gout.

Studies have already shown that purines found in plant foods are not as detrimental to gout compared to animal-based purines. If anything, eating your veggies will help you become healthier, so make sure to always have them on your plate at every meal.

Whole grains: this is the best type of grain to eat for gout. They are high in fiber and antioxidants, which can be very helpful in fighting inflammation. When going to the grocery store, you want to pick only the best whole grains such as whole oats, brown rice, quinoa, bulgur and sorghum. Try to avoid refined grains such as white bread, cereal and white pasta. Grains like these are highly processed and stripped of the beneficial germs that are good for you.

Coffee and tea: great news! You can still enjoy your favorite cup of coffee or tea even if you have gout. Both drinks are known to reduce uric acid in the body; just make sure they are not laden with sugar, sweeteners, milk

or other artificial additives, as this can be counterproductive.

Low fat dairy: milk, particularly skim milk, can be consumed when you have gout. As for yogurt, you'll want to look for the low-fat kind. Oh, and who can forget cheese? You can enjoy all kinds and get the benefits. These kinds of dairy contribute to lowering uric acid in the body, helping you to avoid those dreaded gout attacks. Milk contains casein and lactalbumin, which are proteins that have a uricosuric effect in the body.

Lean meat: you're going to have to be pickier with your meat when you have gout. Only opt for lean meats like chicken and turkey. You may also have the occasional red meat such as lamb, beef and pork. Worried about your limited protein intake? Forget it. The average person doesn't need as much protein as you may think, especially from meat. You can even replace it with plant-based proteins like beans and nuts.

Fatty fish: another way to boost your protein intake is by eating fish, particularly the fatty kind. These are rich in omega 3 fatty acids, which help increase your good cholesterol and decrease the bad cholesterol. You'll want to be picky on this one though, as picking the wrong kind of fish can trigger gout attacks. Opt for fatty fish like salmon and tuna. Also, look for the organic kind that's labelled "wild caught" instead of farmed fish.

Nuts and seeds: the right nuts and seeds contain nutrients which are very helpful for people with gout. The best nuts will contain high amounts of healthy fats and fiber, which make you feel satiated for longer. They are also good for your heart and help reduce your risk for blood clots. Nuts and seeds that are good for gout include walnuts, almonds, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, flaxseeds and cashew nuts.

Red wine: the only alcoholic beverage you can consume when you have gout is red wine (if you choose to have some alcohol). It does not raise uric acids as dramatically as beer does. In fact, a moderate single serving may even help with your symptoms. But make sure to stop at only that. It's been shown that drinking two glasses of wine or more a day increases the risk for gout attacks.

Foods to Avoid with Gout

Just as there are good foods to eat with gout, there are also foods and drinks that can worsen your gout.

Alcohol: all alcohol, except for red wine, is bad for gout. They are high in purines which turn into uric acid that build up in your joints. Best to avoid them as much as possible.

Seafood: unfortunately, most seafood is not good for gout. Seafood is usually high in purines, which can trigger a gout attack. Eliminate most of the seafood from your diet including sardines, trout, scallops, lobster, mackerel, anchovies, whitebait, caviar, fish roe, crayfish and herring.

Sugar-laden treats: Sugary foods are just that, treats. It's okay to have them once in a while. However, eating them regularly will result in you experiencing more gout symptoms. This is because most sugary foods contain high fructose corn syrup, which is known to raise uric acid levels in your body.

Organ Meats: organ meats are one of the biggest problems for gout. Avoid organ meats including liver, kidney, heart, tripe, brain, tongue and sweetbreads.

Are there any offenders in this list that you have yet to give up? What "good" gout foods have you started adding to your diet? Share your thoughts in the comments below.