6 Types of Food That Cause Gout

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What Foods Cause Gout?

Food plays a very huge role in gout. You could be eating unhealthy kinds of food for many years and not feel anything, and then all of a sudden you get hit with extreme pain in one of your joints. The next thing you know, you are living with gout for the rest of your life. It's not a happy story, but it is one that many gout patients live with. So, what foods cause gout? You're about to find out.

If you are one of these people mentioned above, it is important that you are aware about the foods that cause gout. That way, you can avoid them and save yourself from a potential gout flare. Even if you might not have it yet but you suspect that you could have it due to certain risks, such as your weight or family history, it is easier to take the right steps now so you do not have to suffer like other patients have.

So, what foods cause gout?

1. Red Meat

Red meats and organ meats are foods that are very high in purines. This results in high uric acid production in the body, potentially causing a gout attack. It's best to stay away or limit your intake of these kinds of meats. Consider other alternatives such as chicken breast or fresh fish. If you do eat meat, make sure to control your portions and not eat more than 6 ounces in a day. These are healthier for you and they do not contain as many purines as red meat does.

2. Alcohol

Alcohol is another top food item that causes gout. If you regularly consume beer, now is the time to cut back. This can help reduce your risk for developing and experiencing gout. Beer especially is high in purines which can accumulate as uric acid in the blood. The more pints you drink, the more likely you are to have a gout attack. The same goes for other types of alcohol such as spirits and wines.

3. High Fructose Corn Syrup

High fructose corn syrup (HCFS) is an ingredient in most food items we see in groceries today. It's in your chips, cereal, cookies, fruit juice, and so much more. It's a terrible ingredient that is often used in processed food. What's even scarier is that it can hide in less obvious foods like ketchup, yogurt, and crackers. Like the other foods mentioned above, HCFS increases your uric acid, so it is best to steer clear from it. Make it a habit to read the label every time you are at the supermarket. If HCFS is on the list of ingredients, put it back on the shelf.

4. Shellfish

When you first got diagnosed with gout, your doctor probably told you to stay away from seafood. To be specific, you need to avoid shellfish since they are very high in purines. This includes shrimp, lobster, perch, herring, and anchovies. Just like red meat, you need to limit your intake of these food items or only eat them during special occasions.

5. Sugary Beverages

Sugary beverages often contain fructose which is another trigger for gout. If a drink is sweet and it is processed, it probably contains artificial flavors and sweeteners which is not good for your condition. Stay away from these drinks and opt for something healthier instead like water or tea.

6. Processed Foods

We all know processed foods are bad for us and yet we continue to eat them because they are so convenient and oh so flavorful. What you do not know is that these foods are designed to be addictive, so you keep coming back. If you have gout, do yourself a favor and cut back now. Processed foods contain MSG and this combined with isonates (often found in processed foods) can raise uric acid levels in your body.

How to Prevent Gout

Above, we have discussed the top foods that cause gout. In order to prevent that dreaded gout flare, make sure that you avoid these foods as much as possible. It can be very difficult to do so if you are accustomed to eating them. Gradual change is key. Start small. Do not overwhelm yourself with many changes at once. This can lead to a perfectionist mindset which can quickly result in failure. This is not to discourage you. It's simply human nature to gravitate towards things we are accustomed to.

Let's say you enjoy orange juice during breakfast. Most fruit juice contains high fructose corn syrup which can raise uric acid levels. You can replace this with a healthier drink instead, such as green tea or coffee. Stick to doing that for a week until it becomes a habit.

Once you have adapted to that change, you can move on to other items in your diet, like alcohol, dessert, energy drinks, chips, etc. You'll begin to notice your symptoms slowly disappearing. To add, you might even feel better as a result of following a healthy diet.

But a healthy diet is not enough to combat gout. Here are more ways to prevent it:

Lose Weight

Most gout sufferers are overweight or obese when they get diagnosed with the condition. To fight gout, you need to lose that extra weight. This will allow that excess uric acid to get out of the body as well.

Drink Lots of Water

Another way to flush out excess uric acid is by drinking lots of water. The more water you drink, the more diluted uric acid in your blood will be. You'll also be taking more trips to the bathroom, helping to prevent uric acid from accumulating in your body.

Get Moving

It seems to be counterintuitive when you are suffering from a joint condition but doing so can actually help you. By getting in some physical movement, you help strengthen your joints, so they are not as vulnerable to attacks. Exercise is also a great way to lose weight, so win-win!

Manage Your Stress

Stress can be a source of many unhealthy things: laziness, procrastination, poor food choices. All this is a recipe for an incoming gout attack. Make sure you are managing your stress levels by making realistic to-do lists and taking the time to relax.