4 Tips to Help You Prevent Gout

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How to Prevent Gout

If you suffer from gout, you know that you would do anything to prevent those horrible flare-ups from happening again, and there is currently no cure for gout. Dealing with these two facts may be a tough pill to swallow, but it is definitely not the end of the world. In this article, we will cover how to prevent gout, so you can live a healthy life despite risks or symptoms.

The fact is that gout, also known as gouty arthritis, is a highly treatable condition that requires a few lifestyle changes to keep under control. When you consider the debilitating pain of a gout flare-up, taking some of the preventative steps we will discuss below is a no-brainer.

As you will quickly see below, preventing gout has a lot to do with improving your overall health. While it does mean placing some limits on certain pleasure foods, the health benefits you will gain will more than offset these minor sacrifices.

Before we dive into our gout prevention tips, let’s take a look at some of the common factors that trigger a gout attack.

What Causes Gout?

Gout is a severely painful form of inflammatory arthritis and is commonly found in men. With that being said, cases of gout in women have been steadily increasing as people are living longer than before and gaining more weight.

Gout is caused when there is an excess buildup of uric acid in the blood which can lead to a condition called hyperuricemia. When there is too much uric acid, our kidneys are unable to properly metabolize it in the body. Instead of this waste being excreted from the body via the urine, a lot of it stays in the blood. Over time, the leftover urate acid starts hardening into needle-like urate crystals within the joint areas.

Regular joint movements will eventually start breaking bits and pieces of these crystalized needles which start crushing against the joint tissues. These actions trigger a violent inflammatory response from the body’s immune system. Thus, you get the sharp pains, redness and severe tenderness that is typically associated with a gout flare-up.

As this process unfolds, the victim is already in a world of agonizing pain. Although gout pain most commonly starts off in the big toe area, it can also develop in any joint area of the upper and lower body.

Tips on How to Prevent Gout

Although there is no cure for gout, there are several methods you can use to avoid these painful attacks. Some of

the tips we will describe below include lifestyle and dietary recommendations to mitigate the risk of chronic gout.

Nevertheless, these tips will help you reduce the chances of severe gout attacks happening.

1. Give Your Diet a Much-Needed Makeover

When it comes to providing effective gout treatments, doctors will typically start by making some dietary recommendations. This is due to the fact that excessive buildup of uric acid is often caused by a large number of purines we consume.

Purines are a chemical substance that is created naturally in our bodies but is also found in many of the foods we eat. When purines are broken down, they are converted into uric acid which is essentially a waste product.

The more purines we consume, the more uric acid is created in our bodies. However, not all purine is created equal. For example, red meat is known for having a high purine content. However, so is spinach but it is rarely (if ever) associated as a risk factor for gout. This is because vegetables are rich in vitamins and nutrients that can help mitigate the harmful effects of elevated purine content. That is why even though they may have a strong purine content, doctors recommend eating fruits and vegetables as part of a gout-friendly diet plan. Consumption of red meats, on the other hand, should be kept to a minimum.

2. Control Your Drinking

Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can contribute greatly to developing a gout attack. Opinions may vary on what type of alcohol is a bigger risk factor, but beer is usually singled out as one of the biggest offenders.

This is because alcohol impairs your body’s natural ability to excrete uric acid which can quickly lead to hyperuricemia and, of course, a full-blown gout attack.

As a gout sufferer, however, your concern should be focused on limiting your intake with ALL types of alcohol. As each drink increases your chances of developing a painful episode with gout, the less you consume, the better.

3. Stay Hydrated

We all know that drinking water on a regular basis has many health benefits. For gout sufferers, however, drinking plenty of water helps ensure that your kidneys are up to the task when it comes to flushing out those uric acid waste products from your body.

You can think of water like oil to a car engine, as long as you have a fresh supply, all the parts will work efficiently. Keep it too dry, and that is when the problems can start happening.

Drinking water also helps keep your joints lubricated and digestive system functioning properly. Plus, the more you urinate, the more you are helping your body flush out those waste products.

How much water is adequate for a person depends on their age, sex and weight as well as other factors. As with most things in life, drinking excessive amounts of water can lead to other health risks, so check with your doctor on what is right for you.

4. Stay Young by Staying Active

The link between weight gain and gout was established long ago. In fact, centuries ago gout was seen as a disease for the rich since rich families tended to live more sedentary lifestyles, unlike the working-class people.

Today, many developed nations are facing an obesity crisis. The data is clear: the more overweight you are, the higher your levels of uric acid tend to be.

Contrary to popular belief, working out the joint areas that are affected by gout is actually the smart thing to do. You can start small with simple exercises that help increase your joint strength. These can include walking, cycling and swimming.

Although some experts recommend getting at least 150 hours of quality exercise per week, it is best to start slow and increase the intensity as your body gets used to it.

In Conclusion

It is important to keep in mind that although gout attacks come and go, it is crucial to treat these attacks head-on with either therapy and/or medication. Continued gout attacks can be severe and even cause joint degeneration.