How Dairy Products Positively Impact Gout Symptoms

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Gout and Dairy: Can Dairy Help Gout?

You may have asked yourself, “is dairy bad for gout?” Here we consider what types of dairy is safe with gout, and what sort of foods are safe to eat with dairy concerning your gout.

Is Dairy Good for Gout?

Some foods have been found to increase the risk of gout, but milk products are not one of them. In fact, milk, especially the low-fat kind, makes for a great addition to your kitchen. Even if it is high-fat, you need not worry since it is not associated with gout risk.

The Connection Between Gout and Milk

In 2012, Dalbeth and his colleagues did a study on milk products for the prevention of gout flare-ups. They divided the 120 gout patients into three treatment groups who would separately receive lactose powder, skim milk powder and enriched skim milk powder (with two dairy fractions: glycomacropeptide and G600 milk fat extract).

After the study, they found that those who drank skim milk decreased their incidence of gout flare-ups compared to those who only received lactose powder. The enriched skim milk group also experienced enhanced uric acid excretion and improvements in the tender joint count.

In the study, they also concluded that skim milk and low-calorie yogurt were inversely associated with urate, while semi-skim milk, full-fat milk, low-fat yogurt and full-fat yogurt were not associated with it at all.

Why Is Dairy Good for Gout?

Dairy is good for gout because it contains proteins casein and lactalbumin, which have been found to have uricosuric effects. This means it increases the excretion of uric acid in the urine, thus reducing its concentration in the blood.

Dairy is also low in purines and helps excrete xanthine, which is a purine base. Furthermore, an orotic acid found in milk decreases uric acid reabsorption and promotes excretion by the kidneys.

In a Canadian study in 1991 led by Dominique Garrel, they found that the two proteins found in cow milk helped increase uric acid excretion and lowered serum uric acid levels by over 0.5mg/dL. It’s not much, but considering that it happened in just three hours, it is pretty impressive!

What the participants took, however, was 80 grams of milk proteins, and not the milk itself. To experience the same benefits, you would have to drink more than 8 glasses of milk a day! That’s a lot of milk!

What Kinds of Dairy Can I Consume?

Milk and other dairy products such as cheese, butter, cream and yogurt can be consumed since they are all low in purines. They contain about 0 milligrams to 50 milligrams of purines per 100 grams, which is considered very low. Try to consume at least four servings of these per day to reduce your risk of developing gout symptoms.

Just be careful with ice creams, flavored milk and yogurt products. They are loaded with artificial sugars which can be bad for your gout and waistline. Stay away from refined sugars like fructose and opt for other sweeteners like sucralose instead.

You can pair celery with cheddar cheese for a great anti-gout snack. One study on 15,000 Americans found that those who ate all kinds of cheese enjoyed lower uric acid levels. You can also consume yogurt with live cultures in them since this can help dissolve up to a third of uric acid. Making a habit of consuming dairy products regularly can help lower your uric acid over time.

How Much Milk Should I Drink?

A more realistic approach would be to drink one glass of milk a day. It's not much, but if you make it a part of your daily routine, it can make a big difference to your uric acid levels. Also, make sure you are drinking plenty of water. Uric acid is not very soluble, but water helps dilute it before it crystallizes. Make sure you are drinking at least eight 1-ounce glasses of water every day.

If you are just drinking milk alone, forget it. Milk may be 88% water but drinking it by itself will not dilute the uric acid that needs to be excreted. Water assists with this, so you want to make it a point to drink water first before drinking milk.

What Else Can I Eat With Dairy?

Dairy is beneficial for gout sufferers, but if consumed in combination with other gout-friendly foods, it can help amplify its effects. For example, taking cherries and milk on the same day can enhance the benefits.

Other gout-friendly foods you can take along with your daily consumption:

- Eggs
- Cold-water fish
- Nuts and seeds
- Vegetables with low-purine content
- Vitamin C rich foods like orange, papaya, cherries and tangerines
- Apples, pears, avocados, pineapples

It's also good to mix up your meals, so your taste buds do not get bored. Consider experimenting with different gout-friendly foods and create your own recipe.

What if I'm Lactose-Intolerant?

If you are lactose intolerant, you can opt for lactose-free milk which can be found at your local health food store. Don't use soy milk as an alternative as it can make your gout worse. First of all, it is not milk, and second, it contains moderate to high levels of purines which is what your doctor recommends you avoid.

The Takeaway

Consuming milk products is recommended to help prevent and manage your gout symptoms. If you only have hyperuricemia, you are still advised to drink low-fat milk because it can help prevent uric acid buildup, thus avoiding the development of gout.

If you drink milk religiously but continue to eat foods that trigger your gout, do not expect for a miracle to happen. Even meds will not help you in the long run because gout will eventually overpower these drugs if your flare-ups get persistent.

More studies are being done to understand the relationship between gout and dairy fully. It’s advised that you do your research and always be updated with the latest gout news so you can better take care of your health.