

Gout and Your Diet

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Gout is a form of arthritis caused by a buildup of uric acid crystals in a joint. It causes sudden attacks of pain, swelling, redness, and stiffness, usually in one joint, especially the big toe, ankle, and knee.

Gout may come on without a cause, but there are things you can do to help lessen the chances it will happen.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FEEL BETTER?

Drink enough water, avoid alcohol and sugary drinks.

- Drink 8 to 10 cups (2 liters) of water per day, to make sure you are hydrated (have enough water in your body).
- Avoid beer and hard liquor. Alcohol can reduce the release of uric acid by the kidneys into your urine, causing an increase of uric acid in your body.
- Avoid sugar-sweetened drinks like sodas, energy drinks, and fruit juice.

Low fat dairy foods (like milk and yogurt) may protect you against gout attacks.

- Eat or drink at least 2 to 3 servings every day of low fat dairy foods (such as nonfat and 1% milk or low fat yogurt).
- Limit whole fat dairy such as whole milk and cheese.

Eat a more plant-based, high fiber diet, and choose lean meats.

- Eat a more plant-based, high fiber diet including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low fat dairy.
- Choose lean proteins like white chicken meat, turkey, fish and beans.
- Limit red meat, beef, pork and lamb and keep to 3 ounces for a serving (deck of cards).
- Avoid or extremely limit high purine foods like organ meats, mackerel, herring, and tuna.
- Eat fruits such as bananas, pineapple, and fresh berries like strawberries, cherries, blueberries, and other red-blue berries as they can help to reduce the risk of a gout attack.
- Eat foods high in vitamin C like red cabbage, red bell peppers, oranges and tangerines.
- It is okay to include some high purine vegetables in your diet. High purine vegetables include asparagus, cauliflower, mushrooms, dried beans and peas and spinach.

If you are overweight, work towards gradual weight loss.

- Work to lose weight slowly, with a loss of no more than 1 to 2 pounds a week.
- Quick weight loss can cause breakdown of body proteins and ketone production resulting in increased risk of gout flare up.
- Avoid high fat, low carb weight loss plans, as these may make your gout worse.
- Exercise on a regular basis for at least 30 minutes every day.

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Eat at least 3 small meals a day and don't skip meals.

- Eat at least 3 meals a day, spaced throughout the day (morning, afternoon and evening).
- Avoid skipping meals.
- Avoid eating large, heavy meals.

What else can I try?

- Eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids such as ground flax seeds, salmon, walnuts, chia seeds and canola oil. These foods can help reduce the build-up of uric acid in the blood stream.
- Cook with natural spices and herbs such as celery root, turmeric, ginger, cayenne (capsicum).
- Drink herbal teas such as green and peppermint.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have joint pain and a fever.
- The joint is so painful you cannot use it.
- You have sudden, unexplained swelling, redness, warmth, or severe pain in one or more joints.
- Your symptoms get worse or are not improving after 2 or 3 days.