

Making Simple Diet Changes May Help Reduce Gout

If you or someone you know suffers from painful joints as a result of Gout, simple dietary changes may help.

Gout is a type of arthritis due to a build up of uric acid in the joints. This can lead to severe pain, tenderness and swelling in the joints. Under normal circumstances, the kidneys filter out the uric acid from the blood and excrete it in the urine. Excess build up of uric acid can come from the kidneys' inability to keep up with the uric acid production or if the body just produces too much of it.

Most individuals don't have to worry about gout, but others are susceptible and have experienced these symptoms. Diet, alcohol consumption and environmental factors all contribute to the likelihood of a person developing gout.

A combination approach of diet and medication is most typical in treating gout today. You should always consult with your physician about medications that may be appropriate for you if you suffer with occasional recurring episodes of gout.

Individuals who are susceptible to gout can pay attention to certain items in the diet to help reduce uric acid build-up in the blood. Eating a reduced-purine diet is typically recommended to individuals who wish to lessen gout episodes. Purine is a substance in foods that breaks down into uric acid, but it does not account for all of the uric acid formed each day in the body. However, a high purine diet is well known to raise blood uric acid levels.

High purine foods include: anchovies, sardines, kidney, game meats, gravy, herring, liver, mackerel, meat extracts, scallops and sweetbreads. Foods that have moderately high purine content include: bran, asparagus, eel, fresh and saltwater fish, cauliflower, legumes, meat, mushrooms, oatmeal, poultry, shellfish, spinach, wheat germ, whole-grain breads and cereals. Since a purine-free diet is considered unpleasant and difficult to follow given the abundance of purine containing foods in the diet, paying special attention to reducing those foods that are HIGH in purine is generally advised. Being familiar with high and moderately high purine foods only to avoid excessive consumption is prudent.

Alcohol consumption is another common contributor to increased uric acid levels and should therefore be moderated. Also, consuming enough *non-alcoholic* beverages (especially water) up to 8-12 glasses a day may help flush out uric acid crystals that may have a tendency to accumulate in the joints. People who are overweight tend to have higher uric acid levels; therefore, it is important to aim to reach or maintain a healthy body weight.

References:

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