

**Gout, which is more common in men, is a kind of arthritis that results in response to the uric acid crystals in the joints, bones and soft tissues. Excess uric acid is produced with increased intake of purine rich foods.**

**Purines are naturally formed in the body and found also in certain foods that we consume. Some foods have high levels of purine while others contain moderate to low levels of purine. Meat, seafood and beer are high in purine. Purine breaks down to uric acid, a waste product, when digested.**

**High consumption of fructose, a type of sugar, will also lead to increased amounts of uric acid levels in the blood and increase insulin resistance as well.**

## OUT WITH THE GOUT

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**T**he amount of uric acid in the body depends on the balance between dietary intakes, its synthesis in the body and the rate of its excretion.

So, a simple change to the type of foods consumed can reduce the frequency and severity of the gout. The gout diet approach is focused on both limiting the body's production of uric acid and the increased elimination of uric acid.

### Obesity highly linked to gout

Limit the saturated fat and high sugar foods. Sugary foods are high in calories that lead to overweight and gout. Saturated fats tend to lower the body's ability to eliminate the uric acid. Choose low-fat milk and yoghurt as they are low in purine and help reduce the uric acid formation.

You can consume low purine refined-starchy foods such as rice, quinoa, barley, pasta, potatoes and enriched-white bread for they are low in purine. At the same time, keep in mind that refined foods are low in fibre. It is wise to have them along with fibrous vegetables to keep you full for a longer time. Whole grains are healthier than refined. But should be only consumed occasionally as they contain moderate amounts of purine.

### Limit meat, poultry and seafood

Animal proteins are rich in purine. Limit your consumption of high-purine foods which include animal organs, herring, anchovies, mackerel, fatty fish like tuna, shrimp, lobster and scallops. Red meats like pork, beef and lamb are associated with increased production of uric acid that leads to gout. Eggs are low in purine. However, if your cholesterol level is high, your egg consumption should then be limited to three to four a week.

### Vitamin C & dairy products help lower uric acid levels

Fresh whole fruit and salads and vegetable soup are ideal for snack time. Research has shown that cherries could be good in reducing the uric acid level in blood. In addition, flavonoid-rich berries like strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, cranberries as well as pineapple, lemon and lime may help reduce the symptoms of gout while raspberries may even help to alleviate gout pain.

### Nuts & vegetables

Kailan, lettuce, radish, carrots, tomatoes, beetroot are low in purine levels. Avoid eating vegetables such as asparagus, and spinach more than twice a week for they are high in purine. Almost all nuts are moderate in purine so it is best to moderate your intake of nuts.



## Fasting will influence gout attack

Fasting tends to cause dehydration, and that raises uric acid levels in the blood. You may have insufficient amounts of water in the body to flush out the uric acid through the kidneys.

## Avoid beverages and drinks sweetened with high fructose corn syrup

Fructose increases the uric acid in the body. High fructose corn syrup can be found in unexpected foods like bread, yoghurt, cereals and bars, sauces, and jams. Read the food labels before purchasing.

Alcohol interferes with the elimination of uric acid. Beer, particularly, is linked with high serum uric acid.

Keep hydrated always. Drink plenty of water. Aim for eight to 10 glasses of water every day. Water helps to flush the uric acid from the body.

### Sources:

[www.webmd.com/arthritis/tc/gout-topic-overview](http://www.webmd.com/arthritis/tc/gout-topic-overview)  
[www.arthritistoday.org](http://www.arthritistoday.org)  
[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)  
[www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)

Eating a balanced diet with a limit on purine-rich foods can help alleviate gout symptoms and also prevent future attacks. If overweight, a gradual weight loss with healthy eating habits and regular physical activity will help maintain the weight and prevent gout attack. Crash diet and rapid weight loss will actually trigger the uric acid formation and increase the risk of gout!

Cucumber-tomato-pineapple salad looks colourful and healthier for dinner. Strawberry yoghurt smoothie sounds good for a mid-morning snack! Try these recipes:

### Strawberry yoghurt smoothie

½ cup Greek yoghurt

½ cup plain water

1 cup strawberries

Whirl up berries with yoghurt for a creamy, refreshing snack

### Cucumber-tomato-pineapple salad

1 cup cucumber

1 cup pineapple

1 cup tomato

1 tablespoon chopped coriander

1 tablespoon chopped mint

2 tablespoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Mix the cucumber-tomato-pineapple and dress them with a light & flavourful, mixed coriander-mint-lemon juice-pepper salad dressing.

**Gout can cause sudden burning pain, stiffness, and swelling in a joint, usually a big toe.**

**These attacks can happen repeatedly. You can harm your joints, tendons, and other tissues if gout is not treated.**

