

# Managing Gout on Your Kidney Diet

## What is gout?

Gout is a condition of painful swelling in the joints. Gout usually affects the feet, ankles, knees, hands and wrists.

## What causes gout?

Gout is when uric acid builds up in the body. Crystals form and collect in the joints, causing pain, swelling, and inflammation. Uric acid builds up when our bodies make too much or when our kidneys do not flush enough of it away.

Our body makes most of the uric acid (85%) while the rest (15%) comes from food and drinks. It may be more common in people who are overweight, have high blood pressure, high blood lipid levels, and insulin resistance. It is more common in males than females.

## How is gout treated?

Treating gout includes:

- reaching and staying at a healthy body weight
- healthy eating
- drinking enough fluids
- not drinking alcohol
- limiting sugar-sweetened drinks
- taking your medication

## What can I do to manage my gout?

### 1) Stay at a healthy body weight.

You may have fewer gout attacks when you lose extra body weight. Eating healthy smaller portions, along with regular activity, can help you reach and stay at a healthy body weight. For more help, ask your dietitian.

Losing weight too fast may cause an attack of gout. Try not to lose more than 1 to 2 pounds ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 kilogram) per week. Do not follow a high protein diet or a fasting diet to lose weight.

### 2) Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups every day.

- **Include grain products** as part of your balanced diet. Remember, whole grains can cause your phosphorus to rise, so follow your dietitian's recommendations on grain products.
- Follow your dietitian's advice for the portion size and number of servings of **fruits and vegetables** each day.
- **Choose lower fat milk products** such as skim or 1% milk, lower-fat cheese, lower-fat yogurt, 1% cottage and ricotta cheese.

Remember, milk products are high in phosphorus and potassium, so follow your dietitian's recommendations for portion size and number of servings of milk products each day.

- **Choose leaner meats, poultry, and fish.**
  - Limit meat, poultry, and fish to about 5 to 7½ ounces (150 to 225 g) per day, or follow your dietitian's advice.
  - Beans, peas, and lentils are high in phosphorus, and potassium. Follow your dietitian's advice about these.
- **Limit fat.**
  - Limit high fat foods such as butter, margarine, salad dressings, and mayonnaise.
  - Avoid deep fried food and rich desserts.
  - Trim visible fat from meats and remove skin from poultry.
  - Try low-fat cooking methods such as baking, broiling, roasting, and microwaving.

### **3) Drink 8 to 12 cups (2 to 3 litres) of fluids (not alcohol) every day.**

If your doctor or dietitian has recommended a fluid restriction, follow the fluid restriction. If you are not on a fluid restriction, drink 2 to 3 litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluid a day. The best choice of fluid is water so aim for at least half of your allowed fluids to be water.

Limit regular or decaffeinated coffee to no more than 2 to 3 cups per day.

### **4) Limit or avoid alcohol.**

Alcohol, especially beer, can cause a build up of uric acid in your body. It may also interfere with your medications. If you choose to drink, do not have more than one drink per day or three drinks per week. One drink is 12 ounces (355 mL) of beer, or 5 ounces (150 mL) of wine, or 1½ ounces (45 mL) of hard liquor. Speak with your doctor or dietitian if you have any questions.

### **5) Limit sugar-sweetened drinks.**

Sugar-sweetened drinks such as pop, slushies, and fruit flavoured beverages can cause uric acid to build up.

### **6) Do not fast.**

Going without food for one day or more may cause a gout attack. If you choose to fast, talk with your doctor.

## **What can I do when I am having an attack of gout?**

- **Do not drink any alcohol.**
- Drink 8 to 12 cups (2 to 3 litres) of fluids per day, unless you have been asked to restrict fluids by your doctor or dietitian.

## **What can I do if I keep having gout attacks?**

If you keep having gout attacks, it may help to limit foods that have purines in them. The body breaks down purines into uric acid. Eating foods that have purines in them can increase the amount of uric acid in your body.

Common foods that are high in purines are listed below. **Avoid these during a gout attack:**

- Organ meats (heart, brain, kidney, liver)
- Game meats (buffalo, deer, elk, goose, moose, partridge)
- Meat extracts (Bovril®, Oxo®)
- Gravy
- Anchovies, herring, mackerel, sardines
- Scallops

Gout often occurs with diabetes and high blood pressure. If you have one or both of these conditions, or other health conditions, ask your doctor or dietitian about treating these conditions at the same time.