

GOUT: BEST WAYS TO PREVENT ATTACK

Amy J. Keenum, DO, PharmD, Editor

Ronald Januchowski, DO, FACOFP, Health Literacy Editor

Simone Majetich, DO, Author

Larry Witmer, DO, Author



Gout is a form of arthritis that causes a sudden episode of swelling and pain in joints. It usually only affects one joint, but some people can have it in more than one joint. Increased levels of uric acid in the blood stream can form sharp needle-like crystals that build up in joints, causing pain and swelling. These crystals can also form kidney stones. Risk factors for gout include obesity, high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, consuming too much alcohol on a regular basis, overeating, consuming large amounts of seafood or meat or high fructose corn syrup, and taking medications that affect blood urate levels. You can help prevent gout attacks by changing your diet and reducing your intake of these. Your doctor may treat you with an anti-inflammatory for acute episodes or place you on long term urate-lowering therapy to help prevent attacks.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES INCLUDE:

- Avoid foods that trigger a gout flare, including red meat, seafood, asparagus, mushrooms and beverages that contain high fructose corn syrup.
- Limit alcohol intake, particularly beer and hard liquor. You may consider a small glass of wine per day if this has not caused symptoms for you in the past.
- Try to eat more vegetables and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.
- Eat foods made with complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, brown rice, oats, and beans.
- Drink lots of water to help flush uric acid from your body.
- Get physically active and lose weight if you are overweight.
- Consider taking 500 mg of Vitamin C daily as it has a mild urate-lowering effect.
- If you have other health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, or obesity, it is important that you work with your doctor to manage them. Improving your overall health may help with your gout too.

MEDICAL CARE & TREATMENT OPTIONS:

If you develop sudden severe joint pain with redness, swelling and tenderness to touch, please call your Osteopathic Family Physician. Gout is a treatable condition and your physician can help to reduce the pain and inflammation you are experiencing. Recurrent episodes may also benefit from long term medications to prevent or reduce the severity of attacks. In case of any emergency, you should call your doctor or 911 right away.

SOURCE(S): *American Academy of Family Physician, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and UpToDate.com*

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