RECOMMENDED DIET FOR THOSE WITH GOUT

Gout is a painful form of arthritis and has long been associated with diet, particularly overindulgence in meat, seafood, and alcohol. It occurs when high levels of uric acid in your blood cause crystals to form and accumulate around a joint. Your body produces uric acid when it breaks down purines. Purines occur naturally in your body, but they are also in certain foods, such as organ meats, anchovies, herring, asparagus, and mushrooms. Gout treatment used to include severe dietary restrictions, but newer medications have reduced the need for such a strict diet. Newer diet recommendations resemble a healthy-eating plan recommended for most people.

We recommend this diet developed by the Mayo Clinic. It will help you maintain a healthy weight and avoid several chronic diseases in addition to possibly contributing to better overall management of your gout.

To follow the diet:

• **Limit meat, poultry, and fish.** Animal proteins are high in purine. Avoid or severely limit eating organ meats, herring, anchovies, and mackerel. Beef, pork, lamb, fatty fish, and seafood (tuna, shrimp, lobster, and scallops) are associated with increased risk of gout. Because all meat, poultry, and fish contain purines, limit your intake to 4-6 ounces (113-170 grams) daily.

• **Cut back on fat.** Saturated fat lowers the body’s ability to eliminate uric acid. Choosing plant-based protein, such as beans and legumes, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products will help you reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet. High-fat meals also contribute to obesity, which is liked to gout.

• **Limit or avoid alcohol.** Alcohol interferes with the elimination of uric acid from your body. Drinking beer, in particular, has been linked to gout attacks. If you’re having an attack, avoid all alcohol. When you’re not having an attack, drinking one or two 5-ounce (148-milliliter) servings of wine a day is not likely to increase your risk.

• **Limit or avoid foods sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup.** Fructose is the only carbohydrate known to increase uric acid. It is best to avoid beverages sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup, such as soft drinks and juice drinks. Juices that are 100% fruit juice do not seem to stimulate as much production of uric acid.

• **Choose complex carbohydrates.** Eat more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables; and eat fewer refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, cakes, and candy.

• **Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.** Some studies have shown that low-fat dairy products can help reduce the risk of gout.

• **Drink plenty of fluids, especially water.** Fluids can help remove uric acid from your body. Aim for 8-16 glasses a day. A glass is 8 ounces (237 milliliters). There is also some evidence that drinking 4-6 cups of coffee a day lowers gout risk in men.
A Sample Menu Provided by the Mayo Clinic

**Breakfast**
- Whole-grain, unsweetened cereal with skim or low-fat milk, topped with fresh fruit
- Whole-wheat toast with trans-free margarine
- 100% fruit juice
- Coffee

**Lunch**
- A lean meat, poultry, or fish (2-3 ounces) sandwich on whole-wheat bread with lettuce, tomato, and low-fat spread
- Carrot and celery sticks, side salad, or vegetable soup
- Fresh fruit, such as an apple, orange, or pear
- Skim or low-fat milk

**Dinner**
- Baked or roasted chicken (2-3 ounces)
- Steamed vegetables
- Baked potato with low-fat sour cream
- Green salad with tomatoes and low-fat dressing
- Fresh fruit, such as berries or melons
- Nonalcoholic beverage, such as water or tea

You can add snacks to this menu as long as you make healthy choices—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, occasional nuts—and as long as you are at a healthy weight or stay within your calorie limit.

Following a gout diet can help you limit your body’s uric acid production and increase its elimination, which may help prevent gout attacks or reduce their severity. The diet is not a treatment for gout, but it may help control your attacks. It’s also not likely to lower the uric acid concentration in your blood enough to treat your gout without medication.

Following the gout diet and limiting your calories—especially if you add in moderate daily exercise, such as brisk walking—can also improve your overall health by helping you to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Since obesity is also a risk factor for gout, losing weight can help you lower your risk of attacks.

The gout diet is not that different from the healthy-eating patterns recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Thus, the risks following the diet are few, if any.

Includes information appearing on and adapted from mayoclinic.org