



Gout (inflammatory arthritis)

Lifestyle information sheet

Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis caused by having too much uric acid. High levels of uric acid can lead to crystal formations that cause needle-like pain and result in swollen and painful joints.

Gout manifests itself in flare-ups that can last for several days or a week. They often begin in the big toe or a lower limb. Accompanying symptoms of gout flare-ups include: having chills, fever, general feeling of cold or malaise, sometimes hard lumps of urate crystal deposits under the skin (tophi).



Helping you manage the condition with diet



Having a balanced and varied diet is key. Balanced diet means you eat foods from all the three macro-nutrients: protein, carbohydrate and fats, and keep your diet varied by rotating and alternating foods regularly.



It is important that you avoid processed and ultra-processed foods
It is also important to avoid sugar-added foods and drinks



Some sugary foods and drinks such as sweets, cakes, fizzy or soft drinks contain high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). These foods can put you into insulin resistance state, which can then increase uric acid levels and put you at a higher risk of developing gout.

Top tip: Eat an **anti-inflammatory diet**/ **Mediterranean diet**, e.g. fatty fish, avocados and extra virgin olive oil. Eat the rainbow, ensuring your diet includes plenty of vegetables and fruit (6-8 cups) with different colours, e.g., different berries, carrots, cherries, broccolis, beetroot, etc.

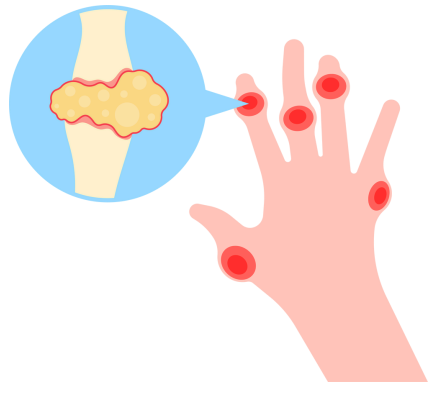


Fluids:

A high intake of fluids can help to remove uric acid through the kidneys. Aim to have 8 - 12 large glasses of water per day (1.5 - 2.5 L), increase your water intake during a flare up. If you are on diuretics (water tablets) or have kidney problems, consult your doctor to make sure that a high fluid intake is safe for you.

Alcohol

Alcohol increases the risk of developing gout and having gout flare-ups. Reducing alcohol intake is necessary, abstaining from alcohol is ideal.



Gout (inflammatory arthritis), cont.

Helping you manage the condition with exercise

Low to moderate intensity physical activities can have a positive effect on uric acid levels, however, high intensity activities may exacerbate them.

During a gout flare up:

Listen to your body! If you find any form of exercise is difficult during a flare-up, it's best not to exercise and rest up. You may find that light cardio or non-weight-bearing low-intensity exercise may be possible and may help you reduce inflammation. Do not exercise through intense pain. If your pain levels increase, stop and give yourself rest.



Types of exercise for gout:

Choose lower impact exercises such as swimming, water aerobics to manage joint pain. Flexibility exercises such as yoga can help restore motion. Maintaining muscle strength, especially in the lower extremities, is also important, so doing body weight exercises when pain subsides is recommended.

Exercise needs to be consistent. The current exercise guidelines are to perform at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week. Avoid high intensity exercise, especially during and immediately after a gout flare-up. This can increase uric acid levels.