

Department of  
**NUTRITION & DIETETICS**

# Dietary Management of Gout



## What is Gout?

Gout is a form of arthritis caused by too much uric acid in the blood. The build up of uric acid in the blood may be due to ineffective removal by the kidneys and/or a diet that increases the amount of uric acid you produce. High levels of uric acid cause crystals to form and accumulate in the joints. This results in swelling, inflammation and pain – a gout attack.



## Risk Factors for Gout

Non-modifiable	Modifiable
Age	Overweight/obese
Family history	Medical conditions
Gender (being male)	Diet (high purine, sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juice, alcohol, insufficient fluids)

## Treatments for Gout

- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Dietary modifications

## Goals of Dietary Management

- ✓ To minimise the occurrence of gout attacks

## Basic Dietary Guidelines

### 1. Aim for gradual weight loss if you are overweight/obese

Being overweight/obese increases your risk of gout attacks. Achieve and maintain a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5-25.0 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The best way to lose weight safely is through a healthy, balanced diet and regular physical activity.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$$

### 2. Manage your medical conditions well

Gout is often associated with other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease.

### 3. Avoid high purine foods and excessive consumption of meat, fish and seafood

Uric acid is produced when your body breaks down purine. Avoid high purine foods to reduce your risk of gout attacks.

High purine foods include:

- Organ meats e.g. brain, heart, kidney and liver
- Some types of seafood e.g. scallops, mussels and fish roe
- Some types of fish e.g. anchovies, herring, mackerel and sardines
- Meat and yeast extracts
- Stock cubes, broths and gravies



Meat, fish and seafood contain a moderate amount of purine. However, they also contain many essential nutrients and should be included in your diet. Therefore, you do not need to cut them out altogether, but avoid excessive consumption.

Some types of vegetables and legumes (beans, lentils and peas) contain a moderate amount of purine. However, they are not associated with increased risk of gout attacks. Therefore, they are encouraged as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

### 4. Limit sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juices

Research suggests fructose in sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juices increases your risk of gout attacks. As these drinks also contribute to weight gain, you should limit your consumption of these drinks and choose healthier options such as water.

### 5. Limit alcohol



Some types of alcohol e.g. beer are high in purine. Alcohol also disrupts the removal of uric acid from the body as your body may prioritise removing alcohol over removing uric acid. Thus, it is recommended to avoid alcohol altogether.

### 6. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids

Drinking plenty of water helps to flush out uric acid from your body. Water should be taken liberally unless you have to restrict fluids due to certain medical conditions e.g. heart failure and kidney disease. The amount of fluid your body requires depends on your weight. As a general rule, aim for 8 cups (2L) of fluids daily.

## Summary

- ✓ Aim for gradual weight loss if you are overweight/obese
- ✓ Manage your medical conditions well
- ✓ Avoid high purine foods and excessive consumption of meat, fish and seafood
- ✓ Limit sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juices
- ✓ Limit alcohol
- ✓ Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids

## Where can I get More Information?

To find a dietitian, please call 6357 8322 for an appointment.

You will need to obtain a referral from your doctor for a dietitian consultation.

### Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

TTSH Medical Centre, Level B2

#### Contact:

6357 7000 (Central Hotline),

6357 8322 (Appointment Hotline)



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to  
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