Gout

What is gout?

Gout is a kind of arthritis. It can cause an attack of sudden burning pain, stiffness, and swelling in a joint usually a big toe. These attacks can happen over and over unless gout is treated. Over time, they can harm your joints, tendons, and other tissues. Gout is most common in men.

What causes gout?

Gout is caused by too much uric acid in the blood. Most of the time, having too much uric acid is not harmful. Many people with high levels in their blood never got gout. But when uric acid levels in the blood are too high, the uric acid may form hard crystals in your joints.

Your chances of getting gout are higher if you are overweight, drink too much alcohol, or eat too much meat and fish that are high in chemicals called purines. Some medicines, such as water pills (diuretics), can also bring on gout.

What are the symptoms?

The most common sign of gout is a nighttime attack of swelling, tenderness, redness, and sharp pain in your big toe. You can also get attacks in your foot, ankle, or knees. The attacks can last a few days or many weeks before pain goes away. Another attack may not happen for months or years. See your doctor even if your pain from gout is gone. The buildup of uric acid that led to your gout attack can still harm your joints.

How is gout diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask questions about your symptoms and do a physical exam. Your doctor may also take a sample of fluid from your joint to look for uric acid crystals. This is the best way to test for gout. Your doctor may also do a blood test to measure the amount of uric acid in your blood.

How is it treated?

● To stop a gout attack, your doctor can give a shot of corticosteroids, or prescribe a large dose of one or more medicines. The doses will get smaller as your symptoms go away. Relief from a gout attack often begins within 24 hours if you start treatment right away. To ease the pain during a gout attack, rest the joint that hurts. Taking ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory medicine can also help you feel better. But don’t take aspirin. It can make gout worse by raising the uric acid levels in the blood.

To prevent future attacks, your doctor can prescribe a medicine to reduce uric acid buildup in your blood. If your doctor prescribes medicine to lower your acid levels, be sure to take it as directed. Most people continue to take this medicine for the rest of their lives. Paying attention to what you eat may help you manage your gout. Eat moderate amounts of a healthy mix of foods to control your weight and get the nutrients you need avoid regular daily intake of meat, seafood, and alcohol (especially beer). Drink plenty of water and other fluids.

Source: http://arthritis.webmed.com/tc/gout
8 Gout Causing Foods

Scallops
Cut back on seafood and meat during a flare-up. These animal foods are rich in purines, which your body breaks down into uric acid. You have a little more freedom in your food choices when your gout is a bay, at most. Scallops and salmon are okay for an occasional indulgence.

Herring
Whereas some types of seafood can be eaten once in a while, others should be off the menu completely for those who have gout. Avoid herring, tuna and anchovies for example. On the other hand, shrimp, lobster, eel and crab are relatively safe.

Beer
Drinking beer is a double-whammy for gout-prone folks. Not only does it increase your uric-acid level, beer also makes it more difficult for your body to clear this substance from your system. Wine is a better choice, but heavy drinking is a bad idea for everyone, and people who get gout are no exception. During a flare, doctors will usually recommend that you abstain from alcohol entirely.

Red Meat
All meat is not created equal when it comes to purine content. White meat is generally better than red, but it is okay to eat some types of red meat once in a while. And lamb chops are a better choice than leg meat.

Turkey and goose are higher in purines than other types of food, so it’s best to avoid them. And gout-prone people should also keep their intake of wild game to a minimum. Chicken and duck are the safest choices. However, leg meat is a better choice than chicken breast skin.

Sugary drinks
Avoid beverages sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup, such as non-diet sodas or “fruit” drinks. Downing these drinks aren’t just an easy way to pack on pounds; the sweeteners will stimulate the body to produce more uric acid. A study found that men who consumed lots of fructose were at higher risk of developing gout; in 2010 that same research team reported that drinking fructose-sweetened drinks every day, compared with consuming less than one drink a month, upped women’s gout risk too.

Asparagus, cauliflower, spinach, and mushrooms are higher in purines than other vegetables. But if you like those foods, there’s no reason to avoid them completely. Veggie-rich diets actually help you clear purines from the body, while the body seems to have an easier time excreting purines from vegetable sources.

Liver
Organ meats, such as liver, kidneys, and sweetbreads, are a major no-no.

What to eat instead
Feel like you’re left with nothing to eat? Not true, experts say. There are actually several types of foods, complex carbohydrates, and coffee, and fruits, especially citrus fruits. You should also be sure to get 12 to 16 cups of fluid daily. You don’t necessarily have to drink only water (although it shouldn’t be beer!)-you can choose non-sweetened juice, tea, and coffee too. Any kind of fluid that keeps that blood is flowing and urine flowing.

Source: http://www.health.com
### 4 ways to slash stress in 60 seconds or less

**Do 25 jumping jacks**  
Move your body no matter how briefly, to stop the stress response in its tracks and change the channel on your mood.

**Press “play” for puppies**  
Pets are proven stress-buster, but you knew that. Head to wimp.com/littlepuppy start to melt even the gnarling of bad moods.

**Make an instant hot cocoa**  
Research, including a study published in Appetite, shows that even a bit of chocolate can boost your mood almost immediately.

**Go outside!**  
Fresh air is full of feel-good ions, which may boost oxygen flow to the brain. If you can, combine it with exercise, like a brisk walk—actively boosts endorphins and energy.

*Source: [http://www.health.com](http://www.health.com)*

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### 5 days of healthier breakfasts

You already know it’s important to start your day off right — now it’s time to kick it up a notch nutritionally with these easy ideas. Just add...

- **Flax:** Sprinkle one tablespoon ground flaxseed in your bowl of oatmeal for brain-boosting omega-3 fats and two extra grams of fiber.

- **Pistachios:** Spread toast with chocolate nut spread; and chopped pistachios for cholesterol lowering phytosterols.

- **Berries:** Top pancakes or waffles with ½ cup of mashed raspberries to get more than 20 percent of your daily vitamin C needs.

- **Turmeric:** Toss a pitch of ground turmeric into beaten eggs to add earthiness and cancer fighting antioxidants to a veggie omelet.

- **Hummus:** Scheme half a toasted whole-grain bagel with 2TBSP hummus for creamy topping packed with fiber and filling protein.

*Source: [http://www.health.com](http://www.health.com)*
Gluten: 4 things you need to know

Like many people, you’ve probably heard about the phenomenon but really don’t understand what gluten is or what, if anything, you should be doing about it. Yet millions of people in this country are turning their lives upside-down trying to avoid it.

It’s a protein that can cause problems. Gluten is the major protein found in some grains. It is present in all forms of wheat (bulgur, durum, semolina spelt, faro and more) as well as in barley, rye and triticale (a wheat-rye cross). But gluten can also turn up in unexpected places, like certain brands of chocolate, imitation crab (surimi) deli meat, soy sauce, vitamins and even some kinds of toothpaste. Gluten is different from protein in other grains (such as rice) and in meat (such as steak) in that it is difficult for humans to digest completely. It can make some people very sick, but not everyone.

You probably don’t need to completely avoid it. For some people – about 1% of the population – gluten can be a matter of life or death. These people have a condition known as celiac disease. True celiacs, as they are called, are so sensitive to gluten that even a small amount – really just a trace – can make them sick. Because gluten damages the lining of the small intestine in those with celiac disease, it can lead to a host of health problems ranging from chronic diarrhea and abdominal cramping to osteoporosis and even the risk of some cancers. Unless you are part of that 1% it’s unlikely that you will need to live a completely gluten-free lifestyle.

You may need to cut back. With the significant increase in our gluten intake over the past 50 years due to the ubiquity and overconsumption of products made with highly refined wheat flour, we are just beginning to appreciate gluten’s impact on the health. As a society, we are in a state of “gluten overload,” and millions of people are suffering as a result of a condition, called caked gluten sensitivity. When people with gluten sensitively eat foods containing gluten, it triggers unpleasant symptoms: stomach pains, bloating, heartburn, joint pains, headache, skin rashes, fatigue, insomnia and brain fog, to name some of the most common. Although many of these symptoms are similar to those experienced by celiac sufferers, if you turn out to be gluten-sensitive, it probably won’t require giving up gluten entirely.

Living gluten-free can make you fat. Some people who go off gluten to lose weight end up gaining weight instead. That’s because they consume gluten-free packaged products that are often just as high in saturated fat, sugar and sodium as other junk food, and these products often contain ingredients or fillers that affect your blood sugar and trigger cravings. If you find that you can’t eat just a few gluten-free crackers, this product spells trouble. You’re far better off sticking with naturally gluten-free foods, including vegetables and fruits, lean meats, fish and poultry certain whole grain like brown rice and quinoa, reduced-fat or fat-free dairy, nut , seeds, beans and other legumes, and healthy fats, like extra-virgin olive oil.

Source: YahooHealth.com