

Gout – Fact Sheet

Gout is an inflammatory joint disease that can be classified as acute, subacute, chronic or asymptomatic. Gout is experienced as a result of elevated uric acid concentrations whether this be from the body not metabolising and excreting uric acid properly or from the body producing excessive uric acid. When uric acid concentration is high, monosodium urate crystals form and are deposited into body tissues, joints or kidneys. The kidneys are primarily responsible for eliminating uric acid from the body therefore if filtration is compromised in any way this can result in higher levels of uric acid in the body.

Gout generally starts off a monoarticular thereby affecting one joint, predominately starting in the big toe for men and the hands for women, however any joint can be affected. Often first noticed at night time, signs and symptoms often include; pain, redness and swelling however fever, chills and fatigue may also be experienced.

The development of gout is associated with range of different factors including:

- **Genetics** – enzyme defects
- **Obesity** – serum urate increases and renal clearance decreases
- **Comorbidities** – metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, hypertension and hyperlipidaemia
- **Age/Sex** – increases with age and more prominent in men
- **Medications** – affect the way the body excretes uric acid
- **Diet** – high purine-rich foods
- **Trauma** – crystal deposition in areas of high mechanical stress

If left untreated gout can manifest and become destructive known as tophaceous gout where large masses of crystals (tophi) are deposited into joints and surrounding tissues resulting in chronic pain and associated inflammation, damage and erosion to the affected areas.

Nutritional Recommendations

- Incorporate lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly vitamin C rich sources into diet.
- Incorporate more raw nuts and seeds, legumes and wholegrains into diet.
- Fresh cherry or celery juice are great for reducing inflammation and high in vitamin C.
- Adequate hydration – at least 1.5 litres of water daily.
- Reduce/avoid all animal products including processed meats and organ meats as these foods contain high amounts of uric acid.
- Reduce intake of purine-rich foods.
- Limit intake of caffeine, soft drink, refined carbohydrates and sugar.
- Limit the amount of dairy consumed as dairy is acidic forming.
- Avoid alcohol as it promotes the production of uric acid and inhibits the excretion.

By changing your diet based on the above nutritional recommendations is a great start to help manage the pain associated with gout. Customised food plans along with nutrient/herbal supplements are also available and very effective for the management of gout. For more information visit www.good4younutrition.com.au