

# Gout Foods: Avoiding Purine-Rich Foods

From Carol & Richard Eustice. Your Guide to Arthritis.

## Diet Can Help Control Gout Attacks

[Gout](#) is caused by an excess of uric acid in the body. Uric acid results from the breakdown of purines. Purines are part of all human tissue and found in many foods. The excess can be caused by either an over-production of uric acid by the body or the under-elimination of uric acid by the kidneys. Also, the ingestion of foods high in purines can raise uric acid levels in the blood and precipitate gout attacks in some people.

Considered one of the most painful of the rheumatic conditions, gout afflicts an estimated 840 out of 100,000 people, accounting for about 5 percent of all cases of arthritis. Usually, gout affects the joints in the big toe initially. It also can affect the instep, ankles, heels, knees, wrists, fingers, and elbows. The definitive diagnosis for gout depends on finding uric acid crystals in the joint fluid during an acute gout attack.

Along with specific prescribed medications, it is typically recommended that people with gout reduce their intake of purine-rich foods. That dietary recommendation begs the question regarding what foods are purine-rich? Consider though that purines are found in all protein foods and it is *not* recommended that *all purines* should be eliminated from a person's diet.

### According to the American Medical Association (AMA), purine-containing foods include:

- Beer, other alcoholic beverages.
- Anchovies, sardines in oil, fish roes, herring.
- Yeast.
- Organ meat (liver, kidneys, sweetbreads)
- Legumes (dried beans, peas)
- Meat extracts, consommé, gravies.
- Mushrooms, spinach, asparagus, cauliflower.

### Foods which may be beneficial to people with gout include:

- Dark berries may contain chemicals that lower uric acid and reduce inflammation.
- Tofu which is made from soybeans may be a better choice than meats.
- Certain fatty acids found in certain fish such as salmon, flax or olive oil, or nuts may possess some anti-inflammatory benefits.

Avoiding purine-rich foods is only one aspect of treatment however. It is important to take prescribed medications as directed, maintain a healthy/balanced diet, drink plenty of fluids/water, exercise and maintain a healthy body weight. Diets designed for quick or extreme weight loss will work against you though -- they increase uric acid levels in the blood.

### Per the AMA, a balanced diet for people with gout include foods:

- High in complex carbohydrates (whole grains, fruits, vegetables)
- Low in protein (15% of calories and sources should be soy, lean meats, poultry)
- No more than 30% of calories from fat (10% animal fat)

## REFERENCES:

- Gout - Fact Sheet - ACR
- Q & A About Gout, NIAMS