

Gout

Gout is a form of arthritis caused by increased levels of uric acid in the blood. The uric acid forms crystals and builds up in bone joints. This leads to inflammation and pain.

Gout is primarily controlled with medications, such as Allopurinol, which lower uric acid levels in the blood. Making some changes to what you eat can also help during an attack and prevent attacks from happening. These changes can also help improve your overall health.

Achieve a healthy body weight.

- If you are overweight the most effective treatment for gout is weight loss.
- You are more likely to have high uric acid levels and more gout attacks if you are overweight.
- Making good choices about what you eat and drink and being physically active are important to achieve and keep a healthy body weight. For more information, see the booklet Healthy Weight for Adults (code HE1324) available at

www.healthed.govt.nz

Eat three meals each day.

- Spread your food intake evenly throughout the day.
- Avoid rapid weight loss diets and long periods of not eating as this can bring on an attack of gout.

Choose small servings of meat and seafood.

- Meat and seafood are high in purines which increase uric acid in the blood.
- Eat only 1-2 palm sized servings of meat and seafood (beef, lamb, pork, and shellfish) each day to avoid high levels of uric acid accumulating in the blood.
- Avoid liver, kidney and sweetbreads as they are very high in purines.
- Legumes (beans and lentils) and tofu are high in purines but do not increase uric acid in the blood. These are good alternatives for meat and seafood.

Include milk and milk products each day, preferably low fat.

- Two or more servings of low fat milk and milk products each day may help protect against gout.
- Examples of one serving: 1 glass of trim milk (250ml), 1 pottle of yoghurt (125-150g), 2 slices of low fat cheese (40g) or a cup cottage cheese (80g).

Stay well hydrated.

- Drink plenty of fluids each day, especially water
- Choose drinks with little or no added sugar
- Limit fruit juice and sugar-sweetened drinks such as soft drinks

Limit alcohol intake

- Certain types of alcohol increase your uric acid levels more than others. Avoid beer and limit other alcohol drinks to no more than 1 - 2 standard drinks each day.
- One standard drink is the equivalent of: 100ml wine (½ small wine glass) or 30ml spirit (1 nip).
- Avoid any alcohol if you are having frequent gout attacks.