

## **GOUT INFORMATION**

**Gout** occurs mainly in men between the ages of 40 and 60, particularly in those who are either over weight, suffer from high blood pressure or whose diets are high in fatty foods and alcohol. It is rarely seen in children, pre-menopausal women, and men under the age of thirty.

### ***What is gout?***

Gout is a metabolic disorder that causes acute, occasional and painful attacks of arthritis in the smaller joints of the knee, ankle, foot, hand, and wrist-especially the big toe

Facts:

- Gout is the most common cause of inflammatory joint disease in men over 40
- The big toe is the first joint affected in 70% of cases
- Around 10% of patients have what is known as primary gout which is caused by the overproduction of uric acid.
- Gout may affect more than one joint in about 10% of patients

### ***What causes gout?***

Gout occurs as a result of excess uric acid salts in the blood and tissues. When there is too much uric acid in the blood and tissues, it can form crystals in and around joints. If uric acid crystals enter the joint space, they jab at the surrounding tissue when the body moves and cause inflammation - the affected joint becomes red, swollen and extremely tender. Most of us naturally pass out enough uric acid in our urine to keep down the amount in our blood. But some people have high levels in their blood either because they don't pass enough in their urine – which may be as a result of kidney problems or because they are taking certain drugs, which impair excretion - or more rarely because they produce too much uric acid in the first place, owing to an inherited metabolic abnormality.

### ***What is uric acid?***

Uric acid is a by-product of cell breakdown and some foods. It is normally present in low levels in the blood and tissues since the body is continually breaking down old cells and because some familiar foods contain substances which are the forerunners of uric acid.

### ***Can you prevent gout?***

Gout can arise as a result of environmental factors, there are some basic steps you can take to help prevent gout occurring in the first place or prevent recurrent attacks.

- Environmental triggers: Prolonged stress
- Injury
- Unusual physical exercise
- Minor operations

- Severe illness
- Excess weight
- Dieting
- High protein diets
- Alcohol-especially beer
- Drugs-including diuretics and antibiotics which can interfere with the normal excretion of uric acid

There are several things sufferers can do to help prevent a recurrence of gout. Uric acid is a by-product of purine and a low-purine diet is advisable. Foods that are high in purine should be avoided including:

- Meat – particularly red and organ meats, such as liver and kidneys
- Game
- Seafood – especially mussels, herrings, sardines
- Alcoholic beverages – especially beer
- Asparagus
- In addition, yeast products, white flour, oatmeal, sugar, mushrooms, spinach, cauliflower and even some pulses – especially lentils – can all increase the level of uric acid in the body and should be eaten in moderate quantities.
- Quick fix slimming regimes, particularly crash and ‘yo-yo’ dieting and fasting, should be avoided as they also increase the production of uric acid.
- Sufferers should drink plenty of water since uric acid crystals can be secreted by the kidneys as calculi (stones) Drinking 8-10 glasses of water each day washes out the urinary system and helps to prevent any stones from developing.

Resource: [ukgoutsociety.org/images/goutmag.pdf](http://ukgoutsociety.org/images/goutmag.pdf)