

Gout is a form of arthritis. It affects the joints (usually in the knees and feet), causing redness, swelling and extreme pain. Gout is caused by high levels of uric acid in the blood.

Here are some guidelines that may help you avoid an attack of gout.

- 1. Take the medication your doctor prescribes** to control your gout. It is very effective at lowering your uric acid levels.
- 2. If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to 1 – 2 standard drinks at any one time.**
- 3. Eat regularly throughout the day.**
Feasting and fasting can cause a gout attack.
- 4. Avoid** foods that have a high purine content (purines are broken down by the body to uric acid) these are:
 - organ meats such as liver, kidneys, tripe, tongue and sweetbreads
 - canned fish such as sardines, anchovies, herrings and mackerel
 - shellfish, crab, shrimps and fish roe
- 5. Limit** foods that have moderate amounts of purine, these are:
 - cauliflower, beans, asparagus, mushrooms, spinach.
- 6. Protein** foods such as meat, fish and chicken, dried beans and lentils should be eaten in moderate amounts only i.e. one to two servings per day.
- 7. Drink plenty of fluids**, at least 8 cups per day. Water is an excellent choice but you may also use diluted fruit juice, soup, tea, coffee and low fat milk.

8. If you are overweight, gradual weight loss can help minimise gout symptoms. However, it is important that you do not lose weight too quickly as this will make your symptoms worse – aim for a weight loss of 0.5-1kg per week.

9. Continue to eat a variety of foods from the four food groups each day:

- choose at least **6** servings of breads and cereals
- choose at least **5** servings of vegetables and fruit
- choose **2** servings of milk and milk products
- choose **1-2** servings of meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dried beans/lentils

For more information on healthy eating and food servings ask for a Ministry of Health food and nutrition pamphlet e.g. “Healthy Eating for Adult New Zealanders” and “Healthy Lifestyles for a Healthy Weight”