

# Healthy Changes for Managing Gout

## What is gout?

Gout is a type of arthritis that causes pain and swelling in your tissues and joints.

## What causes gout?

Too much uric acid in your body can cause a gout attack. Some foods that you eat have purines. Purines change to uric acid in the body.

## How is gout treated?

- Gout is treated with medicine. The medicine lowers the uric acid in your body. Gout used to be treated with a strict diet but now that has changed.
- In addition to medicine, nutrition and lifestyle changes may also help to control gout attacks.

## Managing gout

### Stay hydrated

Fluids can help your body get rid of uric acid.

- Make water your drink of choice.
- Drink 9–12 cups (2.25–3 L) of water or other fluids every day.
- Examples of fluids are water, milk, fortified soy beverages, plain coffee, and tea.

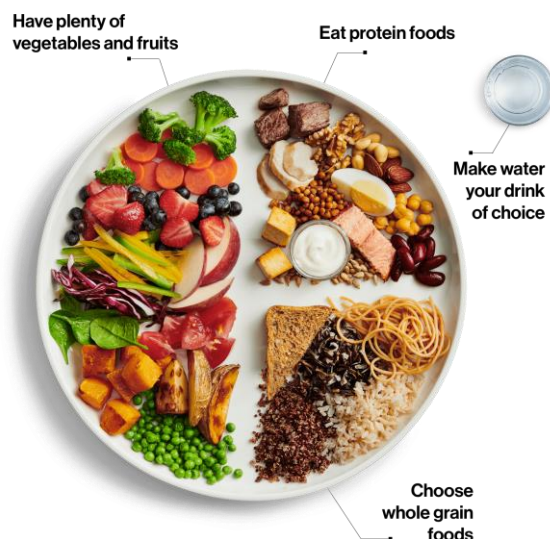
### Limit sugar-sweetened beverages and foods

Sugar-sweetened beverages may increase the risk of gout attacks. Limit the following:

- fluids high in sugar such as pop, fruit drinks, milkshakes, and specialty coffee and tea.
- corn syrup (glucose-fructose), and fruit juices such as orange or apple juice, or fruit juice concentrates.
- candy and sugary desserts like cakes, cookies, donuts, and pastries.

## Follow Canada's food guide

To help you make healthy meal and snack choices use the [Canada's food guide](#) or go to [www.Canada.ca](http://www.Canada.ca) and search for Canada's food guide.



## Enjoy a variety of foods

- Choose a variety of vegetables and fruits instead of juice.
- Choose whole grain foods such as whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, oats, wild and brown rice, and quinoa.
- Choose low fat milk, fortified soy beverages, cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt. Dairy products may lower your risk of gout.
- Choose protein options such as eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, and fish. Plant-based protein foods do not increase the risk of gout.
- Limit foods high in purines such as:
  - anchovies, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, scallops, shrimp, and tuna.
  - organ meats such as liver and kidney.
- Keep portions of meats and seafood small. A serving is 2½ oz (75g).

## Limit or do not drink alcohol

- Drinking less alcohol is better for your health.
- Alcohol, especially beer and hard liquor, can cause uric acid to build up.
- If you don't drink alcohol, don't start.

Talk to your healthcare team if you have questions about alcohol and your health.

For more information, visit [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health \(2023\)](#) or go to [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca), click on Publications, click on Alcohol, then click on Drinking Less is Better.

## Be active

Activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and for managing gout.

- Some of the benefits of activity include lowering the risk of gout attacks.
- Aim to be active for 30 minutes every day.

For more information on activity:

- Talk to your healthcare team
- Refer to the handout [Physical Activity Tips for Adults](#) or go to [www.Canada.ca](http://www.Canada.ca) and search for Physical Activity Tips for Adults.

## Weight and gout

Aim for a healthy body weight.

- Carrying extra weight can increase your risk of gout and make it harder to manage gout attacks.
- If you are overweight, aim for slow weight loss.
- Losing weight quickly can increase your risk of a gout attack.

For support related to your weight:

- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Refer to the handout [Eating Well for Weight and Health](#) or go to [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca), search and click on Nutrition Education, search for Eating Well for Weight and Health.

## Managing gout on your kidney diet

Kidney disease can lead to high levels of uric acid in the blood as the kidneys do not flush enough of it away. This can lead to a gout attack.

- Protein needs can vary greatly depending on your stage of kidney disease.
- Talk to your dietitian about the right amount of protein you need and if you follow a low potassium or low phosphorus diet.
- If your doctor or dietitian has recommended a fluid restriction, follow the fluid restriction.

## Other health conditions

Gout often occurs with other health conditions such as:

- high blood pressure
- high blood cholesterol
- type 2 diabetes
- heart disease

Ask your doctor or dietitian about managing these conditions to prevent gout.

## For more support



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on [ahs.ca/811](http://ahs.ca/811).
- Visit [ahs.ca/Nutrition](http://ahs.ca/Nutrition).
- Call, text, or chat with 211 Alberta ([ab.211.ca/](http://ab.211.ca/)) to find out about financial benefits, programs, and services.

