

# Healthy Eating Guidelines for People with Gout

Gout occurs when urate crystals collect in your joints, making them swollen and painful. Urate crystals can form when you have a high level of uric acid in your body. The amount of uric acid in your body depends on:

- the amount your body makes on its own,
- the amount your body gets rid of, and
- the amount of purine you eat. (As your body breaks down purine, uric acid is formed.)

High uric acid levels are usually caused when your body has difficulty getting rid of uric acid, not because of too much purine in your diet.

Diet can, however, help your body to get rid of uric acid and lower the amount of uric acid it makes. It is often recommended that people limit foods that are high in purine, but there are no foods that need to be avoided.



## Steps you can take

1. Use "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide" [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) to help you plan your meals and snacks. The choices you make may lower the risk of developing gout or having another gouty attack. The following are things to focus on when making food choices:

Limit the number of servings of meat, fish and poultry to 2-3 per day. One serving is 75 g (2 ½ oz).

Higher meat and seafood intakes may increase uric acid levels because of their higher purine content.

Include milk and alternatives in your diet every day. Low-fat

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milk and milk products are your best choice. Examples include skim or 1% milk, low fat yogurt, or low fat cheese (less than 20% MF).

Milk products may help the body get rid of uric acid.

Whole vegetables and fruit are better choices than juice.

2. Aim to drink 2-3 L (8-12 cups) of fluids each day. Water is your best choice. Limit high sugar beverages such as pop, fruit drinks and sweetened coffee and tea drinks as fructose may increase your uric acid level.
3. If you drink alcohol, limit the amount you drink to:
  - 10 drinks a week for women, with no more than 2 drinks a day most days
  - 15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days.

One drink is:

- 341 mL (12 oz.) bottle of 5% beer,
- 142 mL (5 oz.) glass of 12% wine, or
- 43 mL (1.5 oz.) shot of spirits.

Alcohol, especially beer and hard liquor, may increase uric acid levels and increase your risk of getting gout or another gouty attack. Wine does not seem to have an effect. Talk with your doctor if you are unsure about alcohol use.

4. Maintain or aim for a healthy body weight. If you are overweight, talk with your health care provider or a dietitian. They can help you achieve a healthy weight. Use Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) to plan your snacks and meals.



## Notes

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