

GOUT : AN INFORMATION SHEET

HOMEOPATHY

Gout, like any other symptom is a reflection of an underlying imbalance in an individual's system. Homeopathic treatment would incorporate the use of remedies for acute flare-ups while resolving the symptoms in the long term by rebalancing the system.

Gout is the name given to the painful inflammatory condition caused by a build-up of sharp uric acid crystals in certain joints; particularly the toes, feet, ankles, knuckles, thumb, wrist, knees and elbows.

Uric acid is the end product of the breakdown of proteins in the body and is excreted by the kidneys.

Poor kidney function or overproduction of uric acid results in deposition of crystals in the joints

Possible causes/ associations :

- Diet
- Genetic predisposition
- Diuretic drugs. (ask your GP if there is an alternative)
- Niacin or nicotinic acid which is sometimes prescribed for high cholesterol. (ask your GP if there is an alternative)
- Extended fasting (more than 3 days)
- Crash dieting
- Psoriasis
- Obesity
- Insulin resistance syndrome (a potential precursor to heart disease and diabetes)
- Stress

Acute Attacks- Pain Relief

- To keep bedclothes off joint improvise cradle or cage out of cardboard box.
- Try ice packs for 10 mins at a time on towel over joint.
- Do not take aspirin as it can inhibit the dispersal of uric acid from the body. Ibuprofen is preferable.
- Cherries (fresh, dried, canned) are both anti-inflammatories and contain a substance which neutralizes uric acid. Studies suggest app 20 cherries can afford some pain relief. Strawberries and raspberries can have the same effect but you need to eat more of them.
- Pineapples contain bromelain which is also an anti-inflammatory

Xanthine Oxidase

A key enzyme in the production of uric acid so anything which can be done to inhibit the action of this enzyme will be useful.

Eliminate or cut down on dairy products (as this contains Xanthine Oxidase)

The following have been shown to inhibit the action of the enzyme :

- Herbs : Milk thistle (an excellent liver support), centaury, liquorice and turmeric. (N.B do not use any salicylate [from which aspirin is derived] containing herbs such as willow bark, meadowsweet, black cohosh or birch)
- Folic acid
- Tea

GENERALLY

- Generally, our bodies are too acidic which leads to inflammation and eventually chronic illness. We can alkalise the body easily : apple cider vinegar in warm water to drink ; a tsp of acv in a cup of warm water 3x daily or juice of half a lemon in warm water first thing in the morning (add a little honey if need to make it more palatable and use a straw to drink to avoid damage to tooth enamel.) or ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda in a warm water 2 x day
- Avoid or cut down on alcohol (particularly beer as it both increases uric acid production and inhibits its excretion) and drink extra fluid, preferably water, to flush out the kidneys. Try adding a little sodium bicarbonate sometimes as this will alkalise the uric acid. (N.B gout sufferers have a higher than normal tendency to develop kidney stones so increased water intake is very important) .
- Try reducing intake of protein / purine producing foods. (however there is some evidence to show this isn't always very effective as purine is also produced within the body as well as being obtained from dietary sources). But it could be worth a try, especially if it helps identify foods which may act as a trigger for an attack)
- Foods with high purine levels which could be reduced in the diet or avoided. include : offal, meat, shellfish, yeast (brewer's and bakers) herring, sardines, mackerel and anchovies. Other foods containing moderate levels of protein should also be limited, including dried beans, lentils, cauliflower spinach, asparagus, fish poultry and mushrooms. Also cut down on or avoid sugar, white, refined and starchy foods.

BENEFICIAL FOODS

Foods which will help the body deal with/ flush out uric acid from the body are:

- Parsley, tomatoes, papaya fruit, turnip, carrot, celery, and cabbage.
- Onions, leeks and garlic are also good because they contain the active ingredient quercetin which is both an anti-inflammatory and also inhibits the action of an enzyme which triggers the production of uric acid.
- Pineapples

SUPPLEMENTS

- Extra Vit C increases the urinary excretion of uric acid.
- Drink more herb teas especially nettle leaf tea but do not use nettle (also known as urtica urens) in tincture form as the alcohol used to make the tincture will aggravate gout.
- Devils Claw
- Daily doses of fish oil or flax seed oil which are anti-inflammatories.
- Flax seed oil should be taken in its oil form not in capsule (more than a dozen capsules would be needed to equal one tbs oil).
- Fish oil can be taken as oil or capsules but must be Fish Oil and NOT Fish Liver or Cod Liver Oil (as these contain too much Vit A and D)
- Celery seed supplements
- Quercetin (in addition with Vit C if possible)
- Bromelain (for therapeutic effect product must contain 2000MCU's per gram)
Take 500mg 3 x day.
- Vit B complex (essential for digestive function and enzyme systems) especially if trigger factor may be stress .
- Pantothenic acid ; this is an anti stress vitamin and a deficiency can be associated with gout.
- Montmorency Cherry Juice

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Warm epsom salt baths would help reduce the pain as would topical application of warm castor oil.

Applying essential oil of rosemary to the joints will increase blood flow and speed up the process. Peppermint oil will also work in this way, and it will also ease the pain.

SOURCES

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