

Gout: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Acute onset of intense joint pain, typically involving the first joint of the big toe (about fifty percent of cases)

Elevated serum uric acid level

Periods without symptoms between acute attacks
Identification of urate crystals in joint fluid
Aggregated deposits of urate crystals in and around the joints of the extremities, but also in subcutaneous tissue, bone, cartilage, and other tissues
Uric acid kidney stones

QUICK REVIEW

- uric acid crystals deposited in joints cause Gout.
- Several dietary factors are known to be causes of gout: consumption of alcohol, high-purine-content foods, fats, and refined carbohydrates.
- Elimination of alcohol consumption reduces uric acid levels and prevents gouty arthritis in many individuals.
- Liberal fluid intake dilutes the urine and promotes the excretion of uric acid.
- Consuming one-half pound of fresh or canned cherries per day has been found effective in lowering uric acid levels and preventing attacks of gout.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

The basic treatment goals involve: dietary and herbal measures that maintain uric acid levels within the normal range, controlled weight loss in obese individuals, avoidance of known precipitating factors (such as heavy alcohol consumption and a high-purine diet), the use of nutritional substances to prevent further acute attacks, and the use of herbal and nutritional substances to inhibit the inflammatory process.

Diet

Eliminate alcohol intake, maintain a low-purine diet, increase consumption of complex carbohydrates and decrease consumption of simple carbohydrates, maintain a low fat intake, keep protein intake moderate (0.8 g/kg body weight), and consume liberal quantities of fluid. Urinary twenty-four-hour uric acid levels can be used to monitor effectiveness with diet therapy (maintain below 0.8 g/day).

In addition, liberal amounts of cherries, blueberries, and other anthocyanosiderich (red-blue) berries or extracts should be consumed (0.5 to 1.0 pound per day).

Nutritional Supplements

- Flaxseed oil: one tablespoon per day or EPA: 1.8 g per day
- Vitamin E: 400-800 IU per day
- Folic acid: 10-40 mg per day
- Bromelain: 200-400 mg two to three times per day between meals
- Quercetin: 200-400 mg two to three times per day between meals

Botanical Medicine

- *Harpagophytum procumbens*

Dried powdered root: 1-2 grams three times per day

Tincture (1:5): 4-5 ml three times per day

Dry solid extract (3:1): 400 mg three times per day

- Flavonoid-rich extracts such as those from bilberry, grape seed, or pine bark: 150-300 mg daily