



The Mortar & Pestle

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Stafford Pharmacy and Home Healthcare

THE SCOOP ON GOUT

What is Gout?

Gout, a form of arthritis, is a chronic inflammatory disease which can affect one or more joints in the body. Gout occurs when excess uric acid, a waste product of the body, is deposited as crystals in joint tissues. Uric acid can build up if your body makes too much of it, or if your body has a hard time eliminating it.

Who gets gout?

Historically, gout was referred to as the “disease of kings”. It was associated with fat men who had over-indulged in rich foods and alcohol. However, gout can be a real pain for both men and women equally.

Some factors that may increase the risk of developing gout include:

- Genetic predisposition
- Alcohol consumption
- Certain medications
- Poor kidney function
- Consuming a diet with large quantities of purine-rich foods (red meat, organ meat and shellfish)



What are the symptoms of gout?

Symptoms of an acute gout attack include:

- Sudden pain in one or more joints (most frequently the big toe), commonly beginning in the middle of the night
- Pain is described as throbbing, crushing, or excruciating, and it hurts to lay a sheet over the joint
- Joint appears warm and red

After one episode of acute gout 84% of people will have a recurrence within 3 years.

How is gout treated?

An acute episode of gout is treated with healthy lifestyle and diet changes, in combination with medications which reduce the pain and treat the swelling. Medications that may be used are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like ibuprofen), corticosteroids (prednisone), and colchicine. If you think you are experiencing an acute gout attack, seek medical attention immediately. The earlier during a flare-up therapy starts, the faster it will resolve.

If you have been diagnosed with gout and have had more than one attack, you may require daily medication to lower uric acid levels. These medications prevent future attacks as well as complications that are caused by untreated gout. Recurring attacks can permanently damage the joint and lead to chronic arthritis. Kidney damage can also result. Other conditions associated with gout include heart attack, heart failure, and stroke.

If you have questions about gout, speak with one of our pharmacists today!

CHERRIES FOR GOUT

If you are suffering from recurring gout attacks, cherries may be able to help! Cherries contain powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants are dietary substances that prevent damage to your body and repair oxidative damage. For example, when you cut a piece of apple and leave it on the counter it experiences oxidative damage and turns brown. However, if you coat the cut apple in orange juice (which contains the anti-oxidant vitamin C) it will remain white.



Many studies have shown that cherries reduce inflammation and pain associated with gout attacks. Consuming cherries can also reduce the number and frequency of gout attacks by decreasing the amount of uric acid circulating in your blood.

The daily consumption of 20-40 fresh cherries, ½ a can of canned cherries or 4 ounces of concentrated tart cherry juice may help to prevent gout attacks. Additionally, the consumption of cherries is safe for everyone and won't interact with any medications.

In addition to preventing gout attacks, eating cherries can be a part of a healthy diet. Canada's food guide recommends that adults consume ~8 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Twenty cherries count as 1 serving of fruit! For more information on Canada's Food guide visit: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>.

CURCUMIN FOR PAIN

What is Curcumin?

Curcumin is one component of the popular East Indian spice **turmeric**. Curcumin is responsible for the yellow coloring of this tasty spice but NOT the unique flavour.

Why is Curcumin a beneficial?

Curcumin has the following properties: anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-viral, anti-tumor, and blood pressure and lipid lowering abilities.

What can Curcumin be used for?

Studies have shown curcumin to be effective in the treatment of pain caused by **inflammation**, including **arthritis** and **inflammatory bowel disease**. Other benefits shown in clinical studies include cancer protective effects (namely colon cancer) and as adjunct in slowing the progress of Alzheimer's, possibly due to its anti-inflammatory properties.

What are the potential side effects and risks?

Human studies using high doses (2-12 grams) showed few side effects, with some patients reporting mild nausea or diarrhea. Curcumin **should not be used** by those using agents to **prevent blood clots**, such as **warfarin** or **Pradax®**. It should also be avoided in people who have a **history of gallstones**.

Check with your pharmacist before starting on any new vitamin or herbal supplement to ensure the product you have chosen will be safe and effective.

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