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## What is Gout?

Gout is a very painful form of arthritis in the beginning mainly afflicting one or two joints (usually the foot); it may eventually involve several joints and lead to joint damage. This is how: In people with gout the level of uric acid in the blood elevates to a high level (Hyperuricaemia). The uric acid might then form crystals which settle at different joints in the body which then cause an inflammation in this joint. Typically it mainly affects men or women after menopause (very rarely before).

### How is it diagnosed?

By blood tests which measure the uric acid level in the blood (part of the natural break-down of foods and purines = waste products and build-up of body tissues), by joint fluid tests which check for uric acid crystals and by the medical history / physical exam.

### What may trigger it?

Severe illness (i.e. Kidney disease); Crash diets; Purine-rich foods; Certain high blood pressure medications; Obesity (*Warning: crash diets often increase the uric acid levels in the body!*)

### What can you do about it?

Medications which decrease the pain and swelling of the acute attack (these usually don't have any effect on the uric acid level in the body). During the acute attack it often helps to elevate the gout-involved body part in addition to drinking more water and non-activity.

There are drugs which try to increase the function of the kidneys or decrease the uric acid production in the body.

### How does chiropractic help?

We know the nervous system (brain, spinal cord, and nerves) is the master control system of the body. It controls every organ, muscle, gland, etc. at all times. If for example your kidneys don't receive the right nerve supply from the brain, they will not function properly anymore. This could happen due to a misaligned vertebra in the lower back (Vertebral Subluxation). This doesn't need to cause any pain

but over time the kidneys might not eliminate the uric acid in the body. This uric acid would then form crystals at a particular joint and the symptoms of gout would set in (painful red-shiny joint). Correcting these spinal problems is the job of a chiropractor.

### What foods should be avoided?

- Alcohol
- Anchovies, mussels, herring, sardines, scallops
- Meat extracts, yeast, gravies, Organs (hearts, kidneys, liver)
- Goose, Pheasant, Trout

The following foods are considered high in purines as well, but may not raise the risk of gout:

- Asparagus, spinach, cauliflower, peas, kidney and lima beans; Mushrooms; Cereals, breads; Chicken, duck, ham, turkey

Remember: Protein should not be totally eliminated in ones diet, even though purines are found in all protein rich foods.

### What foods are preferred?

- Foods that might possess anti-inflammatory benefits and are rich in Vitamin C such as fresh Bing cherries and natural cherry juice
  - Berries, pineapple, bananas, oranges
  - Green-leafy vegetables, kale, cabbage, celery, parsley, tomatoes, potatoes
  - Red cabbage, tangerines, red bell peppers, mandarins
  - Low-fat dairy products; Tofu
  - Tea, purified water
  - Complex carbohydrates (breads, rice, pasta)
- Essential fatty acids (salmon, tuna, flaxseed, olive oil, nuts, seeds). *Warning: People on a high seafood diet may actually increase their risk of gout.*