Top 4 Gout Treatment Options and What to Expect

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Gout Treatment Options to Consider

Gout is one interesting condition, and once you get it, you are stuck with it forever. The good news is that it is a manageable condition and there is a host of gout treatment options. It's all a matter of finding remedies that work for you and sticking to it. The growing number of gout sufferers has led to a tight community where fellow sufferers share their experiences and insights for managing the condition.

One thing that most people learn when they have had the condition for many years is that gout is not something you can treat with just a pill. You have to make holistic changes in order actually to see the benefits. If you rely on pills alone, you are only treating the symptom, not the root cause of the problem. Also, reliance on prescription pills can take a toll on your kidneys. Did you know that 20% of kidney failures are due to taking too much prescription pills? That's right. You do not want to be taking gout medication for the rest of your life when you can manage it with the help of more natural methods.

Gout affects people differently, and not one treatment will work for everyone. It's not fun to be always worrying about your health, anticipating that next gout flare.

However, gout makes itself a blessing in several ways, such as that it teaches you to be in tune with your body's needs. You become more accountable for your health and you get to learn new things about nutrition that the average person would not know.

In this article, we will explore the many different gout treatment options available, ranging from pharmaceutical drugs to natural remedies.

1. Medication for Gout Treatment

There are different types of medicine for gout. They can be classified into three categories.

Medicine That Lowers Uric Acid Levels

This is the primary treatment for gout as it helps lower uric acid levels. Before you get prescribed this medicine, your doctor will check if you do indeed have hyperuricemia. The goal of taking the drug is to decrease uric acid levels down to 6mh/dL.

After that, you have the option to stop taking the drug. However, most doctors will recommend that you take it daily. It acts as preventative medicine by keeping uric acid levels normal, helping you to avoid gout attacks. But, it should not be taken if you are having a gout attack as it will only worsen the inflammation.

These are the urate-lowering medicines commonly prescribed by doctors:

- Allopurinol (Zyloprim, Aloprim).
- Febuxostat (Uloric).
- Probenecid.
- Pegloticase (Krystexxa).
- Lesinurad (Zurampic).

The saying, “It gets worse, before it gets better” applies to these meds. Most urate-lowering medications will cause a gout flare at the beginning of treatment. In some cases, it takes six months for the drug to take effect, in which case, prophylactic medications are taken together with these meds to help manage the symptoms.

Medication Used With Uric-Acid Lowering Medication (Prophylactic Medicine)

These meds help prevent gout flares and decrease its severity. They are meant to be used for only a short-term. Once taken, expect to feel relief from gout symptoms within 24 hours.

These are the prophylactic medicines commonly prescribed by doctors:

- Colchicine (Colcrys).
- NSAIDs.
- Indomethacin (Indocin, Indocin-SR).
- Diclofenac (Voltaren, Cataflam, Voltaren-XR, Cambia).
- Ibuprofen (Advil).
- Naproxen sodium (Aleve).

Medication That Provides Immediate Relief

Gout attacks often come at unexpected times, so you want to make sure you are always equipped with this medication. That way, when you experience a gout flare, you can treat it right away. It helps decrease pain and inflammation in the affected area.

These are the medications commonly prescribed by doctors:

- Colchicine (Colcrys).
- NSAIDs.
- Prednisone.
- Methylprednisolone (Medrol).
- Prednisolone (Orapred).

These medications are extremely helpful in making the pain from a gout flare disappear. However, you should not depend on it completely as too much steroid use can have undesirable side effects, such as cataract formation and bone loss.

If you combine meds, make sure to speak with your doctor first. They are knowledgeable on drug interactions and can advise you on the right meds to take together and warn you against dangerous combos that can lead to undesirable side effects.

2. Using Diet as a Gout Treatment

The low-purine diet is usually the prescribed diet for gout sufferers. This is because purines are the main culprit for gout attacks.

They break down in the body and turn into uric acid which can build up in the joints. The gout diet can be quite tricky but here are the main principles to keep in mind.

Consume Low-Fat Dairy Products

Low-fat dairy has been found to lower your risk for gout. This is because milk products contain proteins called casein and lactalbumin which have a uricosuric effect, meaning it increases the excretion of uric acid in the urine. It also has orotic acid which decreases the reabsorption of uric acid in the body.

Limit Meat

Frequent meat consumption has been linked to a number of diseases including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart diseases and cancer. It takes a lot more work for the kidneys to process meat, and the body cannot tolerate high levels of fat and blood from meat.

They say it is important for protein, but did you know that you can also get your protein from other healthier sources like plants? Some plant-based protein sources include:

- Tofu.
- Tempeh.
- Edamame.
- Seitan.
- Lentils.
- Chickpeas.
- Peanuts.
- Almonds.
- Spirulina.
- Quinoa.
- Hemp seeds.
- Chia seeds.
- Beans with rice.
- Potatoes.
- Kale.

Limit your meat intake to twice a week and replace it with the healthy alternatives mentioned above. The meats you can eat in moderation include beef, lamb, goat, rabbit, deer, fish, turkey, duck and bison.

Avoid pork as much as possible. It’s a scavenger animal that eats anything, including bad food. Also, stay away from organ meats. These contain the highest levels of purines and toxins which are all bad for your gout. You also want to limit animal-based foods like gravy, bullion, chicken soup and Jello.

Limit Certain Seafood

Certain kinds of seafood are bad for gout while others are good for the reason that they contain omega-3 fatty acids which help fight inflammation.

Fatty fish that’s good for gout include but whatever you do, do not eat any seafood like salmon, smelt, shad, herring, bass and tilapia.

Limit Sugar Intake

Cut out all artificial sugars from your diet including those found in sugary drinks like sodas, fruit juices and energy juices. The worst culprit of all is high fructose corn syrup which is a common ingredient found in many of today’s junk foods.

In some cases, they even use this ingredient in meals and snacks that are marketed as healthy. Read the label and watch out for sugars, especially HFCS. If you must sweeten your meal or drink, opt for natural sugars, like maple syrup, stevia, or honey.

Avoid Junk Food and Processed Food

Junk food and processed foods are filled with sugar and salt which are all bad for gout. Also, they increase the free radicals in your body which can lead to a host of diseases. Quit junk food for a month. You'll find yourself craving for natural foods when you are not addicted to processed food anymore.

Some Purine-Rich Vegetables Are Okay

Certain vegetables have high purines but are okay to eat since they do not impact uric acid levels. This includes peas, beans, lentils, asparagus, spinach, oats, cauliflower, broccoli and mushrooms.

Use Olive Oil

Most oils used for cooking are generally bad for your health. Replace them with extra virgin olive oil, which, when heated, will not lose its benefits.

Be Careful With Caffeine

Most gout sufferers have no problems drinking coffee and other caffeinated beverages, but some have experienced a gout attack after increasing their intake of the drink. Tread carefully with caffeine and drink only when necessary.

Avoid Beer and Liquor

Alcohol, especially beer which is high in purines, is a big no-no for gout. Certain alcoholic beverages are also not good for gout sufferers. This includes whiskey, gin, vodka and rum. Avoid these drinks as much as possible and opt for wine. Wine does not trigger gout, but then again, you should not overindulge on it either. If you must drink beer, opt for the locally-made organic ones. Most mainstream beers are laced with GMOs and high fructose corn syrup which can be very harmful to gout.

Eat Organic

Eating natural foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts are generally good for gout. You want to buy these items at your local market where they are more likely to be fresh and organic.

Because we are all different, some of the tips I shared with regards to diet for gout may or may not work for you. The most important thing is that you do your own research and find out what works for you. Keep track of the food you are eating and identify which foods lead to your gout attacks.

3. Lifestyle Changes for Gout

While taking prescription medications and diet are all part of treating your gout, lifestyle changes can also have a positive impact on gout. Below are some suggested lifestyle changes.

Drink Plenty of Water

Drinking lots of water should be a consistent habit. It helps flush out the toxins from your body, including the crystals that are causing your gout. When you are not hydrated enough, your uric acid tends to rise. So, try to maintain a fluid intake of around 2 to 4 liters a day.

Lose That Excess Weight

Check your BMI and keep it somewhere between 18.5 to 24.9. If it is beyond that, you could be overweight. If your BMI is 30.0 or higher, that means you are obese, and you need to make an effort to lose weight.

Not only is that extra weight an added burden on your joints, but it is also a risk factor for developing gout. This is because most people who are overweight or obese tend to have higher than usual uric acid levels.

Exercise Regularly

This is in conjunction with tip two. In addition to following a strict gout diet, you should also be exercising regularly. They both contribute to helping you lose weight and keeping those joints healthy. Even if it is just walking or doing chores around the house.

However, if you have a gout attack, you should not be exercising. Wait until the pain goes away and your joint is functioning normally again before engaging in any physical activity.

Get to Know Your Triggers

Pay close attention to your diet and see what foods are triggering your gout. All sorts of things can cause your uric acid levels to spike. Knowing what food items triggers you the most will help to avoid gout flares from happening.

No test can help you determine what triggers are causing your uric acid levels to rise, so you are on your own on this one. The good news is that it is almost always easy to recognize what your triggers are.

Keep Stress Levels Low

It's so easy to get stressed by the littlest thing these days. Maybe because you are overworked? Too exposed to the internet and it is worsening our anxiety? Maybe you lack sleep. Or maybe it is the condition itself that is causing you unwanted stress. Whatever it is, try to manage it. Some things you can do to decrease stress include meditation, deep breathing and yoga.

Take the Right Supplements

Certain vitamins and minerals have been found to help with gout. This includes the following:

- **Vitamin C (500 milligrams per day).** This vitamin has a urate-lowering effect which lessens your chances of experiencing gout.
- **Cherry supplements.** Gout sufferers laud cherries for its benefit on gout. The fruit contains anthocyanins which help fight inflammation. However, not everyone can follow the daily recommended consumption of cherries. That's why there are cherry supplements which act as a replacement for eating a bowl of cherries daily.
- **Chanca piedra supplements.** Chanca piedra is an herb that is known to inhibit uric acid. It goes to the root cause of the problem by blocking the production of uric acid in the body, thus avoiding a gout attack. Furthermore, the plant breaks down uric acid buildup and flushes it out from the body.
- **Magnesium supplements.** Dark chocolate, avocados, nuts, legumes, tofu and bananas are some foods that are rich in magnesium. However, if you have a hard time incorporating these into your diet, you can take magnesium supplements instead.
- **Dandelion supplements.** Though unproven to treat gout, dandelion has been found to lower uric acid levels in those who are at risk for kidney problems.
- **Milk thistle.** Originally used for liver health, milk thistle can help lower uric acid especially for those who suffer from kidney complications.
- **Hibiscus.** Hibiscus is a folk remedy used to treat gout. It helps lower uric acid levels.

These lifestyle changes in combination with medication can be effective in keeping gout attacks at bay. It may be hard to make some of these changes right away so do not be too hard on yourself if you fail. Keep trying anyway. Having a positive attitude towards change makes you more likely to stick to those healthy habits.

4. Natural Home Remedies for Gout Treatment

Get Rest

The most important thing to do when you experience a gout attack is to rest the affected joint. Symptoms will only

get worse if you try to move. Get as much rest as possible during a gout attack and only move once the pain has subsided.

Put Ice on It

Wrap ice in a thin towel and apply it on the affected area to reduce inflammation and soothe the ache. Hold for 20 to 30 minutes a day until the pain subsides.

Drink Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar is one of the most popular home remedies for gout because it is cheap, accessible and is packed with health benefits. Its alkalizing mechanism helps reduce acidity in the body, helping to relieve gout pain.

Mix 1 to 2 tablespoons of raw unfiltered and organic apple cider vinegar in a glass of water, and drink it. Do this at least three times a day to really get its benefits. To make your drink even more potent, add lemon juice and turmeric. Both show great benefits when it comes to lowering uric acid.

You can also use apple cider vinegar topically. Just mix 4 cups of water and 1 cup of apple cider vinegar in a bucket and soak the affected joint in it. You may also soak a dry towel with apple cider vinegar and wrap it around the affected area. Leave for 15 minutes before rinsing.

Take Baking Soda

Just like apple cider vinegar, baking soda alkalizes your body, lowering the amount of uric acid. Mix half a teaspoon of baking soda in water and drink multiple glasses of this beverage throughout the day. Aim for up to 4 teaspoons a day. However, if you have blood pressure problems, you' will want to avoid this remedy, as baking soda is high in sodium.

Make Ginger or Turmeric Tea

Both ingredients contain powerful anti-inflammatories which help reduce the pain caused by a gout flare. You can make tea using one of the ingredients or combine them. You can also make a paste of ginger root and apply it topically on the affected area. Leave it on for 30 minutes before rinsing.

Eat Celery Sticks

Celery is commonly used to treat urinary issues, but it can also be taken for gout. This is because celery contains ideal amounts of magnesium which can help lower gout risk.

Eat Apples

Apples contain malic acid that helps lower uric acid. However, it does contain fructose which might trigger flare-ups. Limit consumption to once a day to get its benefits.

Soak in Epsom Salts

Epsom salts are rich magnesium, which is a mineral that can help lower risk for gout. Although studies have shown that it does not have a significant impact when applied topically, certain patients still apply this remedy to get relief from a gout attack. Soak yourself or the affected joint for 30 minutes in Epsom salt to get maximum relief.

In Conclusion

I hope this extensive list of lifestyle recommendations, treatments and remedies will help in your journey to

fighting those dreaded gout symptoms.