

Orthopaedic Connection

Gout and Orthopaedic, The Conclusion

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last week you learned that food and alcohol do not in themselves cause gout.

Food and alcohol can contribute to a gout attack. For example, a person who has an already high level of uric acid in the blood who eats certain foods can raise the uric acid to a level that triggers an attack.

O.K. What are they? I wish I could say they are broccoli, turnips and kale! Sorry.

Red meat

Organ meats

Shrimp, lobster, crab

Beer

Corn syrup high in fructose

Over indulgence in beer and alcohol and over eating can cause fluctuation in the serum uric acid level. In people who may already have uric acid deposits around a joint a gout attack can be precipitated.

Actually these uric acid deposits around joints that cause all the pain and inflammation can slowly dissolve if the serum uric acid level is kept low that is below 6 mg/dl.

Diet Alone

For a patient with gout it is usually not possible to lower your uric acid level by closely watching your diet alone. It certainly is an important component of managing gout, but is not the only thing that needs to be done.

Medication is Needed

There is a drug called Allopurinol (Zyloprim) which is a mainstay of treatment of gout.

Allopurinol can definitely lower your uric acid and in so doing the uric acid deposits around joints will dissolve. This greatly lowers the possibility of a gout attack.

When treatment is started initially a person needs to have their uric acid level checked every two weeks and the dose adjusted. So the dose each person takes may be different from someone else depending on certain variables that their primary care provider monitors.

Your provider decides how often you need your blood checked.

You will, if treated for gout properly, need to take the medication for life.

Conclusion

The chance of gout attacks is greatly lowered if your uric acid level stays below 6mg/dl and the uric acid crystals dissolve.

Beer needs to be avoided as it can trigger an attack.

After you have been free of attacks for several months you could try a small steak or a few shrimp, but not too often.

Sorry to end the discussion on a sour note, but anyone who has been thru the misery of a gout attack soon learns that moderation is a small price to pay for avoiding gout attacks.

My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.

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Good health, good life, all the best to you.

Dr. Haverbush