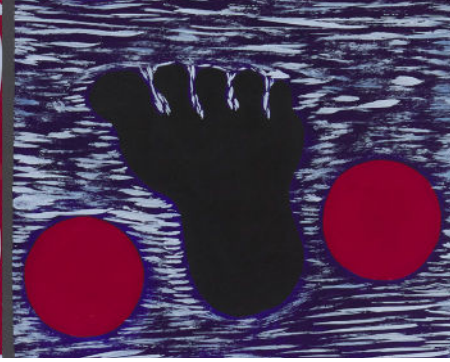
Arthritis AUSTRALIA

Gout and Diet





Gout cannot be controlled by diet alone. The best way to control gout is taking medicine to lower uric acid levels.

Does diet cause gout?

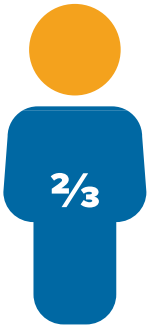
Diet alone is rarely the cause of gout. Gout occurs when there is too much uric acid (also known as urate) in the blood. The main reason this happens is because of genetics. Many people with gout have a family history of gout – it is a condition they inherited. This build-up of uric acid causes small crystals to form in your body. Crystals in your joints can cause swelling and pain known as a gout flare (attack).

Do certain foods trigger a gout flare?

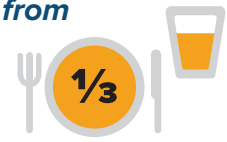
Yes, some foods high in purines may trigger a flare. Purines are chemicals found naturally in the body and in many foods we eat and drink. Our bodies turn some purines into uric acid. Red meat and some seafoods (e.g. shellfish) are especially high in purines and can increase risk of gout flares. Plant-based purines do not have this same effect, even those foods described as purine rich (e.g. mushrooms, beans and lentils).



Tracking your diet and the timing of your gout flares can help identify potential food triggers. However, the best way to keep gout under control and prevent future flares is by taking medicine to lower your uric acid levels.



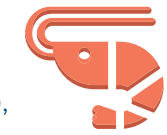
Uric acid is produced in the body by purines. Two-thirds of purines are produced naturally in our body and one-third comes from our diet.

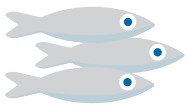


Examples of foods and drinks that can increase uric acid levels in the body:

Red meat	Beef, lamb, pork, goat, veal
White meat	Chicken, duck, turkey, rabbit
Organ meats	Liver, heart, kidney, spleen
Seafood (especially shellfish)	Mussels, scallops, prawns/shrimp, crab, lobster, abalone, oily fish (sardines, anchovies)
Alcohol	Beer and spirits
Fructose-sweetened drinks	Non-diet soft drinks, fruit juice











Busting myths about diet and gout

In this section we tackle some common myths about gout and diet

Myth **I can control gout with diet changes alone.**

Fact Diet alone cannot control gout. While some people may find reducing intake of high-purine foods can lower uric acid levels by a small amount, most patients will still have to take medicines to control their gout and prevent future flares.

Myth **Gout is caused by drinking alcohol.**

Fact People who do not drink alcohol are still diagnosed with gout. If you have gout, alcohol may trigger a flare, but it is not the sole cause.

Myth **I should stop eating fruit because it's high in fructose.**

Fact Fructose is a natural sugar found in fruits. Continue eating fruit because it is good for your health and is packed with nutrients, antioxidants and fibre. You should limit drinks high in fructose such as non-diet soft drinks. Also, limit fruit juices where fructose is highly concentrated.

Myth **Taking vitamin C can help lower my uric acid levels.**

Fact While vitamin C is important for your health, there is no evidence that taking vitamin C lowers uric acid levels. Vitamin C will not reduce the severity or frequency of gout flares.

Myth **Drinking concentrated cherry juice will reduce flares.**

Fact You may have heard that drinking cherry juice can prevent gout flares. However, there is no strong evidence that drinking cherry juice will reduce flares or lower uric acid levels.

What can I do to lower my risk of gout flares?

Here is a list of the key actions you should take to help reduce your risk of gout flares.

- **Take your medicines as directed by your doctor.**
  Prepare a gout plan with your doctor to record your medicine dose and target uric acid level. They can also help you develop a flare treatment plan, so you can take action quickly.

My Gout Plan



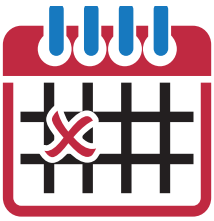
- **Drink water.**
  Stay hydrated to reduce the concentration of uric acid in your blood.

- **Reducing alcohol intake.**
  If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. All alcohol can increase your risk of a flare. Especially beer and spirits, which have high amounts of purines.

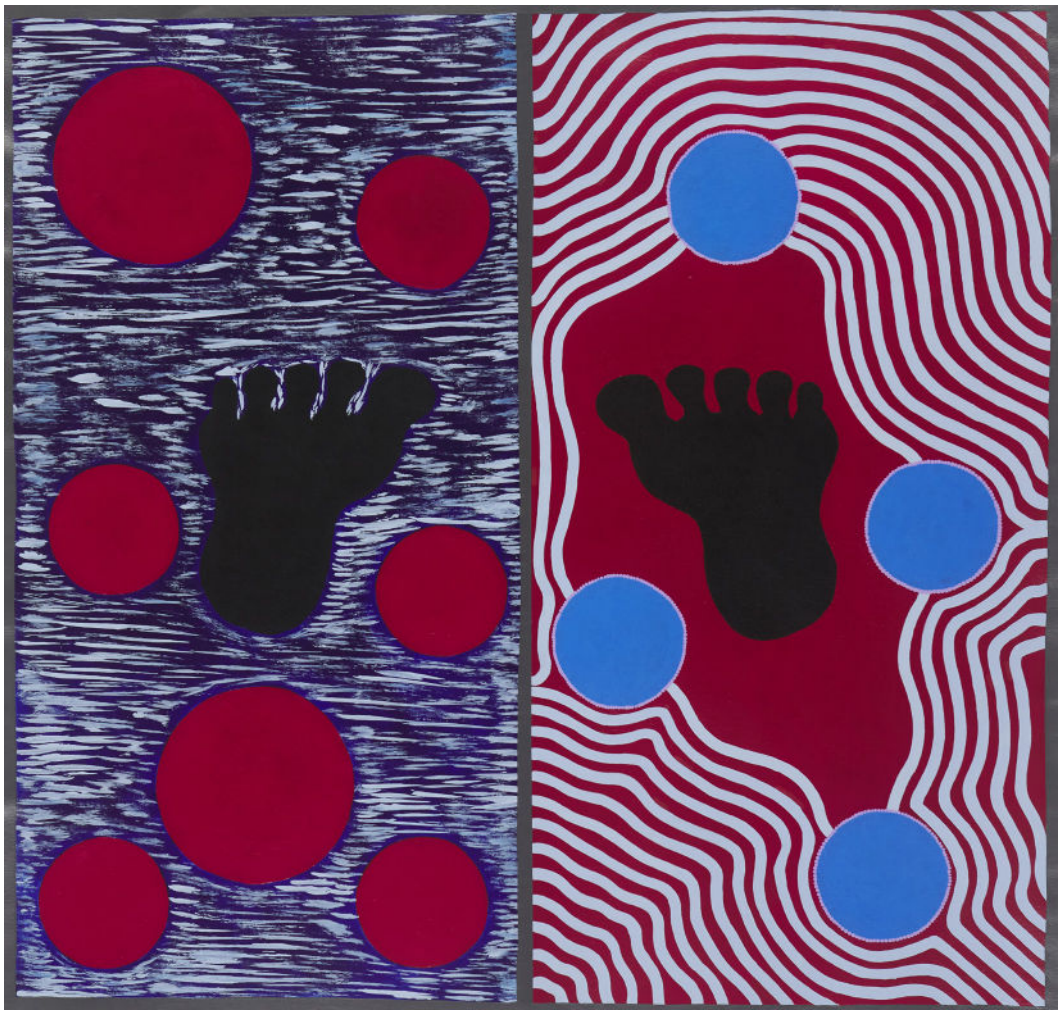


- **Weight loss**
  Being within a healthy weight range can help reduce risk of gout flares. Healthy eating and exercise are the safest way to lose weight. Fasting or 'crash' dieting can trigger a flare.
  So can losing weight too quickly from an intense exercise regime.

- **Consult a dietitian.**
  A dietitian can give you personalised dietary advice to help you maintain a healthy weight. They can also help identify potential dietary triggers of gout flares.



- **Keep track of potential triggers.**
  Keep a diary of your gout symptoms and any foods or activities that may be a trigger for a flare.



Thomas ‘Marksey’ Marks (Wotjobaluk/Gunaikurnai) ‘Burning Steps, Healing Path’ 2025, acrylic on canvas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Find an Accredited Practicing Dietitian, contact Dietitians of Australia on **1800 812 942** or visit www.daa.asn.au
Read the Australian Dietary Guidelines and learn about healthy eating at www.eatforhealth.gov.au
For information about healthy eating, visit Nutrition Australia’s website www.nutritionaustralia.org

Quality Use of Medicines Alliance

Medcast · HealthCare Consumers · QUM connect · WISER HEALTHCARE · Arthritis Australia · Eczema Support Australia · Pharmaceutical Society of Australia · RACGP

Helping consumers and health professionals make safe and wise decisions about medicines and diagnostics.
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INFOLINE: Contact your local arthritis office for information, education and support on **1800 011 041** or visit **www.arthritisaustralia.com.au**

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