

DASH Diet Linked to Lower Risk of Gout

Gout is caused by an accumulation of uric acid crystals in the joints and other tissues. Over time, these crystals can lead to painful attacks of gout, typically beginning in the big toe. The relationship between gout and kidney disease is two-fold, those with gout are 83% more likely to have kidney disease and those who have kidney disease are more likely to suffer from gout. Since the kidneys typically process uric acid, those with decreased kidney function will have a more difficult time eliminating excess uric acid. Typical treatment of gout includes taking uric acid-lowering medications, however many of these medications may be harmful to the kidneys. Because of this, those with decreased kidney function are usually encouraged to treat gout with lifestyle changes such as increased exercise and managing diet.

Previously, we've shared research showing the benefits of the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) Diet in lowering blood pressure and reducing the risk of kidney disease. Now, researchers are observing this diet may also lower uric acid levels, decreasing the risk of gout.

Researchers followed more than 44,000 men for 26 years and observed compared with a 'western' style diet, plant rich diets reduced blood pressure, lowered heart disease risk and lowered the risk of developing gout.

The researchers observed the DASH diet reducing uric acid in the blood, and then wondered if this would lower the risk of gout. They decided to use data from the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study to examine the link between diet and gout risk by assigning each participant a score that reflected how closely their diet matched the DASH one and another score that reflected how closely they followed the Western. The DASH diet is high in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and low-fat dairy and low in red and processed meats, salt and sugary drinks. A Western diet is characterized by high intake of red and processed meats, refined grains, French fries, sweets and desserts.

When the team analyzed the 26 years of follow-up data, they found a higher DASH score was tied to a lower risk of developing gout. The team recognizes their study was observational, therefore it is not possible to draw conclusions about whether the DASH diet caused the reduction in gout risk but they can say it does not contradict this idea. The ability to lower uric acid levels by consuming a plant-rich diet may provide a preventative approach to reduce the risk of gout.

Read More about ['Gout and the Kidney Disease Connection'](#)

Learn More about Gout by visiting the [Gout & Uric Acid Education Society](#)

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