



spotlight on health

How To Avoid A Bout Of Gout

(NAPSA)—Taking a few simple steps can help you manage gout, a painful and potentially debilitating form of arthritis that affects 5 million Americans annually.

What You May Need To Do

Here are hints on how to reduce your risk of a gout attack:

1. Eat a healthy, balanced diet including low-fat or nonfat dairy products, nuts and vegetables.

2. Drink plenty of water.

3. Don't consume a lot of red meat, shellfish and alcohol—especially beer—as these are foods high in purine, a chemical that can contribute to an elevated uric acid level and set the stage for a gout attack.

4. Avoid foods with high sugar content, including white and brown sugar and high-fructose corn syrup found in such products as soft drinks, fruit juices and prepackaged baked goods—there is a growing body of evidence associating a diet high in fructose content with gout.

5. Follow “doctor’s orders” regarding medication and lifestyle modifications.

“Advanced gout can lead to the same level of work loss, physical disability and diminished quality of life seen in advanced rheumatoid arthritis,” said N. Lawrence Edwards, M.D., chairman of the Gout & Uric Acid Education Society, a specialist in rheumatology and professor of medicine at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

He suggests you talk to your doctor about dietary and lifestyle modifications and what types of foods may trigger a gout flare. He also sees a need for more knowledge about the serious



Managing gout focuses on gaining control of symptoms.

health conditions associated with gout.

What You May Not Know

According to a recent Harris Interactive survey:

- Only one in five Americans exercise regularly and eat right and drink alcohol in moderation or don't drink at all.

- Only 28 percent of Americans believe that gout can have a major negative impact on health and well-being.

- Less than half of Americans have had their uric acid level checked within the past five years. An elevated uric acid level is an excellent marker for diabetes and prediabetes and can lead to other medical problems as well as gout.

“Through compliance with doctor’s orders, most patients can gain control of symptoms and continue to lead an active life,” Edwards said.

Learn More

The Gout & Uric Acid Education Society has a free educational brochure as well as a user-friendly website for patients, caregivers, family members and health care providers. For more information, visit www.gouteducation.org.