

Gout: Diet, Lifestyle & Black Cherry Extract

How to prevent painful gout attacks in the big toe, foot, and ankle.

What is gout?

Gout is a form of arthritis caused by uric-acid crystals depositing in a joint — most often the big toe, midfoot, or ankle. Attacks bring sudden severe pain, redness, heat, and swelling. Long-term control depends on diet, hydration, weight, and sometimes prescription medication.

Foods to LIMIT (high purine)

- Red meat, organ meats (liver, kidney), bacon, veal, venison.
- Shellfish, sardines, anchovies, herring, mussels, scallops, mackerel.
- Beer and hard liquor — beer is the biggest dietary trigger.
- Sugary drinks, soda, and anything sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup.
- Gravy, meat broths, and yeast extracts.

Foods to ENJOY

- Cherries (especially tart/black cherries) — 10–12 per day or 1 cup.
- Low-fat dairy: milk, yogurt, cottage cheese — proven to lower uric acid.
- Whole grains, oats, brown rice, beans, lentils, tofu.
- Most vegetables, including those once thought to be 'high purine' (spinach, mushrooms, asparagus — safe).
- Coffee in moderation — associated with lower gout risk.
- Vitamin C-rich fruits: oranges, strawberries, bell peppers.
- Water: aim for 8–10 glasses a day to flush uric acid.

Black Cherry Extract

Black/tart cherries contain anthocyanins that lower uric acid and calm inflammation. Studies show people who consume cherries regularly have fewer gout flare-ups.

- **Concentrate (liquid):** 1 tablespoon (½ oz) once or twice daily, mixed in water.
- **Capsules:** 1000–1500 mg of black cherry extract once or twice daily.
- **Fresh or frozen cherries:** 1 cup per day.
- Choose unsweetened products. Diabetic patients should use sugar-free concentrate or capsules.
- Use daily for prevention, and increase to twice daily at the first sign of a flare.

Lifestyle that prevents attacks

- Lose excess weight slowly — crash dieting can trigger a flare.
- Stay hydrated, especially in summer and after exercise.
- Limit alcohol; if you drink, choose wine in moderation over beer or liquor.

- Take prescribed allopurinol or febuxostat exactly as directed — do not stop during a flare.
- Wear roomy, supportive shoes; avoid tight toe boxes that irritate the big toe joint.

Call our office if...

- You have sudden severe pain, redness, and swelling in a toe, foot, or ankle.
- You have a fever with joint pain (could signal infection, not gout).
- Flares are happening more than twice a year despite diet changes.

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Disclaimer: This handout is for general patient education and is not medical advice. Supplements can interact with prescription medications and may not be safe for every patient. Talk with Dr. Lyons or your primary provider before starting any new supplement, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, have diabetes, kidney or liver disease, a bleeding disorder, or take blood thinners.