

# Gout Diet: Foods To Avoid

What Should You Scratch From Your Grocery List?

## Foods To Avoid

Diets which are [high in purines](#) and [high in protein](#) have long been suspected of causing an increased risk of [gout](#) (a type of arthritis caused by high levels of uric acid in the body which form crystals in the joints, resulting in pain and [inflammation](#)). Results from a study led by Dr. Hyon K. Choi, reported in the March 11, 2004 issue of The New England Journal of Medicine, offer an interesting twist.

## About The Study

Choi's research team followed 47,150 men with no prior history of gout over a 12-year period. The conclusion: during the 12 year period of assessment, 730 men were diagnosed with gout.

- Study participants who consumed the highest amount of meat were 40 percent more likely to have gout than those who ate the least amount of meat.
- Study participants who ate the most seafood were 50 percent more likely to have gout.

In this specific study, though, not all purine-rich foods were associated with an increased risk of gout. There was **no** increased risk associated with a diet which included:

- peas
- beans
- mushrooms
- cauliflower
- spinach

Even though these foods are considered high in purines. Choi's team also found that low-fat dairy products decrease the risk of gout and overall protein intake had no effect. Ultimately, diets shown to be connected to gout are the same kinds of diet linked to cardiovascular disease.

- [The Gout Diet Quiz](#)

## Recommendations For Seafood Should Be Individualized

At this point, it may seem like it gets confusing. Isn't seafood typically recommended as part of a diet which is healthy for the heart? Yet research has revealed that there is a strong, undeniable link between seafood and gout. How does Choi reconcile what seems like conflicting information? He believes "recommendations for seafood should be individualized."

## Sorting Out The Myths

More importantly, how does a person begin to sort the myths from the facts and decide what to buy at the grocery store? According to the University of Washington, Department of Orthopedics:

- Obesity can be linked to high uric acid levels in the blood. People who are overweight should consult with their doctor to decide on a reasonable weight-loss program. Fasting or severe dieting can actually raise uric acid levels and cause gout to worsen.
- Usually people can eat what they like within limits. People who have kidney stones due to uric acid may need to actually eliminate purine-rich foods from their diet because those foods can raise their uric acid level.
- Consuming coffee and tea is not a problem but alcohol can raise uric acid levels and provoke an episode of gout. Drinking at least 10-12 eight-ounce glasses of non-alcoholic fluids every day is recommended, especially for people with kidney stones, to help flush the uric acid crystals from the body.

### **Foods Higher In Purines**

Johns Hopkins lists foods which are higher in purines

#### **Foods very high in purines include:**

- hearts
- herring
- mussels
- yeast
- smelt
- sardines
- sweetbreads

#### **Foods moderately high in purines include:**

- anchovies
- grouse
- mutton
- veal
- bacon
- liver
- salmon
- turkey
- kidneys
- partridge
- trout
- goose
- haddock
- pheasant
- scallops

### **Gout Medications**

Experts at Mayo Clinic suggest that [medications for gout](#) have reduced the need for dietary restrictions, but some modification can decrease the severity or frequency of gout attacks. Dietary modification may also be preferred by people who cannot tolerate gout medications.