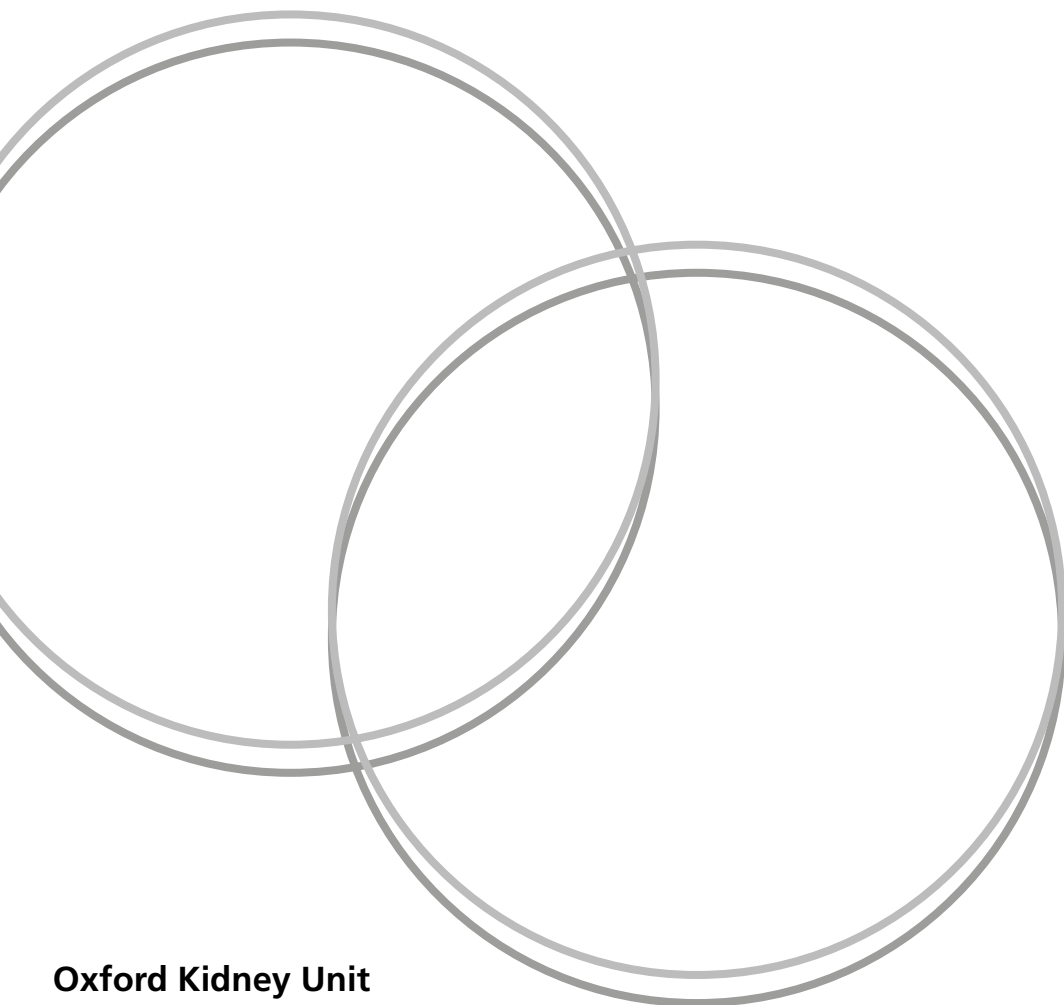




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Renal: Dietary advice for Gout

Information for patients



Oxford Kidney Unit

This leaflet is for you if you are suffering from gout. It will give you information to help manage your symptoms.

What is gout?

Gout causes flare-ups of painful arthritis in the joints. The joint most affected by gout is the big toe, but other areas, such as the knees, ankles and wrists, can also be affected. If gout remains untreated, the flare-ups can last for a long time and keep coming back.

What causes gout?

Gout is caused by a build-up of uric acid in your blood and muscles. This is known as a 'metabolic disorder'.

The high level of uric acid can cause crystals to form in your joints and kidneys, causing a flare-up. The main aim of treatment is to reduce the levels of uric acid in your blood.

What is uric acid?

Uric acid is created when the body breaks down purines. Purines are found in many foods. Normally, the kidneys remove uric acid, which passes out in your urine.

Does being overweight increase my risk of developing gout?

Being overweight increases the production of uric acid in the body and reduces the amount that can be removed by your kidneys. Being very overweight (obese) can also affect your body's ability to break down sugar, which can also lead to high uric acid levels.

Reducing your weight gradually should reduce the frequency and severity of flare-ups. Try to avoid crash, yo-yo dieting and fasting. These can make your kidneys hold onto uric acid, making your symptoms worse.

Below are some top tips for healthy eating and weight loss:

- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day in a variety of colours.
- Try to limit snacks between meals. If you need a snack, choose lower calorie options like vegetable sticks, a piece of fruit or a handful of plain popcorn or try sugar-free gum or sweets in between meals.
- Choose low-sugar and low-fat products.
- Have less foods high in sugar and fat, such as biscuits, chocolate, cake, sweets, crisps, sugar-sweetened drinks, butter and oils and fatty red meats.
- Eat plenty of wholegrain starchy foods rather than white refined foods, as these are high in fibre.
- Use healthy cooking methods (grilling, dry roasting or steaming).
- Make sure your meals are a sensible size – you could try using a smaller plate.
- Keep yourself occupied; boredom can lead you into the kitchen.

Be as active as you can, to burn excess calories

- For a 12-week diet and exercise plan, see the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/weight-loss-guide/Pages/losing-weight-getting-started.aspx

Reducing the levels of purine in your diet

You should eat a healthy, balanced diet, but reduce the number of high purine foods you eat. This will help to prevent sudden attacks of gout and reduce the frequency of flare-ups.

High purine foods and drinks

- offal, such as liver and kidney
- game, such as pheasant, rabbit and venison
- seafood, such as prawns, mussels, clams and anchovies
- sugar-sweetened soft drinks, such as fizzy drinks and fruit juices. Choose sugar-free options
- foods high in refined sugar, such as biscuits and cakes
- alcohol, especially beer, ale, fortified wine and port. All alcohol can make gout worse and should be avoided during an attack of gout. If you are prone to gout attacks reduce your alcohol intake to a minimum or don't drink alcohol at all.

Low purine foods

The following foods contain low levels of purines and can be eaten freely.

- fruits and vegetables. Aim for at least 5 portions per day
- dairy, such as milk, yogurts and cheese. Aim to choose lower fat varieties
- dairy-free alternatives, such as soya and other plant-based products
- eggs
- bread and cereals
- pasta, rice and noodles
- nuts
- beans, lentils and pulses.

Poultry, red meat and fish can be eaten in moderation.

Fluid

Try to avoid becoming dehydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. You should try to drink at least 2 litres (3 and a half pints) each day, with more in the summer months or when exercising. If you have kidney or heart failure and have been advised to follow a fluid restriction, talk to your dialysis nurse, dietitian or doctor about your fluid levels.

Are there some drinks that are better than others?

Drinking sugar-sweetened drinks, such as fizzy drinks, fruit juices and smoothies increases the amount of uric acid in the body. This may cause gout flare-ups.

Try to drink water, tea/coffee, with no added sugar or low-sugar soft drinks.

The dietitians can only provide advice or information to patients cared for under the Oxford Kidney or Transplant Unit (Churchill Hospital). This includes the network units at Banbury, High Wycombe, Milton Keynes, Stoke Mandeville and Swindon (Great Western Hospital). If you do not attend these sites, then please contact your local care team.

Useful websites

UK Gout Society

This website has lots more information about managing gout.

Website: www.ukgoutsociety.org

NHS Choices

This has useful information about gout.

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/Gout/Pages/Introduction.aspx

NHS Weight Loss Plan

This has useful information about losing weight.

Website: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/weight-loss-guide/Pages/losing-weight-getting-started.aspx

Oxford Kidney Unit

Lots of information about the Oxford Kidney Unit for patients and carers.

Website: www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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