

Gout flare-ups rise sharply with certain foods: study

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Research found more attacks after high consumption of compounds called purines, especially from meat, seafood.

(HealthDay) -- Meat, seafood and other foods rich in compounds called purines are associated with a fivefold increased risk of immediate gout flare-ups, a new study shows.

Gout is a form of arthritis that often first occurs in the big toe. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that purine-rich foods can trigger gout attacks, but it hasn't been clear whether they cause immediate attacks.

The study included more than 600 patients with gout, most of whom were men and who had an average age of 54. The patients were followed for a year. During that time, the patients had a total of nearly 1,250 gout attacks, most of which occurred in the toe joints, said Dr. Yuqing Zhang and colleagues at the Boston University School of Medicine.

The average amount of dietary purines consumed during a two-day period without gout attacks was 1.66 grams, compared with 2.03 grams in the two days before an attack, according to a journal news release. Patients in the top 20 percent of purine consumption were nearly five times more likely to have a gout flare-up than those in the bottom 20 percent.

Animal sources of purines -- such as meat and seafood -- were associated with a much higher risk of a gout attack than plant sources, such as beans, peas, lentils, oatmeal, spinach, asparagus and mushrooms.

Not only do plant sources of purines have lower levels of the compounds, they also contain important nutrients and contribute to lowering [insulin resistance](#), something promoted as a way to control gout, the researchers noted.

Other major dietary sources of purines include yeast and alcohol.

"Avoiding or reducing purine-rich [food intake](#), especially of animal origin, may help reduce the risk of recurrent gout attacks," the researchers concluded.

The study was published online May 30 in the journal [Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases](#).

Although the research showed an association between increased purine consumption and more frequent gout attacks, it did not prove a direct cause-and-effect relationship.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [gout](#).

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