

# Hyperuricemia

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Please read, review, and forward any concerns or questions to a MYC Advocate or MYC-approved registered dietitian.

## URIC ACID

Uric acid is a chemical created when the body breaks down substances called purines. Purines are normally produced in the body and are also found in some foods and drinks.

Foods with high content of purines include liver, anchovies, mackerel, dried beans and peas, and beer.

Most uric acid dissolves in blood and travels to the kidneys. From there, it passes out in urine.

If your body produces too much uric acid or does not remove enough of it, you can get sick. Most of the time, a high uric acid level occurs when your kidneys don't eliminate uric acid efficiently.



Things that may cause this slow-down in the removal of uric acid include rich foods, being overweight, having diabetes, taking certain diuretics (sometimes called water pills) and drinking too much alcohol.

A high level of uric acid in the blood is called hyperuricemia.

## FOODS AND FLARE-UP'S

Consuming alcoholic drinks (particularly beer), meat (especially red meat, wild game, and organ meat), some seafood (e.g., shellfish, some large saltwater fish), fruit juice, and beverages sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup increases the risk of hyperuricemia.

Purine-rich foods such as nuts, oatmeal, asparagus, legumes, and mushrooms do not seem to increase the risk.

If uric acid levels are higher than normal in your body, it is recommended that you meet with a dietitian and consult your doctor for medical advice.

## GOUT

If high uric acid levels are not properly managed, urate crystals can accumulate in a joint space, which can lead to irreversibly joint damage and chronic pain.

“Tophi” (i.e., crystal nodules) may also form at the joint space

The index finger is especially prone to crystal deposits. Other common areas where “tophi” can occur include ankles, knees, fingers (wrists, and elbows).

Urate crystals may also be deposited throughout the body (e.g., vertebrae, skin, soft tissues), and can be confused for other diseases.



To reduce the likelihood of recurrent flares, patients should limit their consumption of certain purine-rich foods (e.g., organ meats, shellfish) and avoid alcoholic drinks (especially beer) and beverages sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup.

Consumption of vegetables and small amounts of low-fat or nonfat dairy products is encouraged.

(It is important to note that the following Purine-rich foods do NOT seem to increase the risk for flare-up's and inflammation: nuts, oatmeal, asparagus, legumes, and mushrooms.)

Reduction of uric acid levels is key to avoiding gout and the painful flare-up's associated with gout.

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