

URIC ACID STONES

Uric acid is created when the body breaks down purines, Purines are found in many foods particularly in those high in protein. Normally the uric acid is filtered by the kidneys and removed in the urine.

If there is too much uric acid in the blood it may lead to gout, a painful inflammation of the joints. If there is too much uric acid filtering into the urine and not enough fluid to keep it in solution, the uric acid can crystallise and form kidney stones.

Being overweight increases the production of uric acid in the body. Gradually reducing your weight can help control this but rapid weight loss may actually make the problem worse. Regular exercise will help this process and will provide many other health benefits. This can be as simple as 30 minutes of walking a day.

A healthy, balanced diet is important and visiting a dietician may be useful for further advice but to avoid forming more uric acid kidney stones you should drink 2 to 3 litres of water a day and avoid high purine foods.

HIGH PURINE FOODS

Offal such as liver (eg pate), pancreas (sweetbreads), kidney and lamb's fry.

Game meats such as pheasant, rabbit and venison

Shellfish such as prawns, mussels, scallops and oysters

Sugar sweetened drinks such as fizzy drinks and fruit juices

Some alcohols, particularly beer, ale, fortified wines (e.g. port)

ALCOHOL

In general with alcohol, white wine and spirits with diet drink mixers may be better options. Try to have alcohol free days and keep below the recommended 14 units a week. Make sure you stay hydrated if drinking alcohol because the diuretic effects of alcohol can cause dehydration. Having a glass of water in between each alcoholic drink is one strategy to achieve this.

LOW PURINE FOODS

Dairy foods such as milk, cheese and yoghurt

Dairy free alternatives such as soya products

Eggs

Fruits and vegetables

Bread and cereals

Pasta, rice and noodles

Poultry (such as chicken and turkey), fish and red meats can be eaten in moderation. The general rule of thumb is that your total meat intake for the day should fit in to the palm of your hand.

FLUID

Staying hydrated is very important and a loose guide is that the urine should always appear clear rather than yellow. Aim to drink between 2 and 3 litres of mostly water per day. You

may need to drink more in the summer or when exercising (because of fluid losses to sweating). Tea and coffee are okay to drink in moderation (3 cups a day in combination) but avoid adding sugar.

There are many internet based sources of further information but they are found mostly on sites focussing on gout prevention such as

www.ukgoutsociety.org

www.nhs.uk/conditions/gout