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HYPERURICAEMIA WITHOUT KIDNEY STONES

High uric acid: what can I do?

Diet, weight and habits that help lower uric acid and prevent gout attacks.

🔎 What is it?

Uric acid comes from the breakdown of purines (found in the body's cells and in some foods) and is removed mainly by the kidneys. Hyperuricaemia means it is above ~6.8 mg/dL: from this level crystals can form. Many people never have symptoms; others get **gout** (attacks of joint pain).

💊 Do I need medication?

- **No symptoms:** usually **no** — it is managed with diet, weight and exercise.
- **With gout** (repeated attacks, tophi, joint damage) or kidney disease with attacks: **yes**, medication to lower uric acid (e.g. allopurinol).
- On medication, the target is **< 6 mg/dL** (< 5 mg/dL if there are tophi).

✅ The most important things

- 🍺 **Less alcohol**, especially beer and spirits.
- 🥤 **No sugary drinks** — fructose raises uric acid.
- 🦐 **Little red meat, offal and shellfish**; avoid very heavy meals.
- ⚖️ **Lose weight** if you are overweight, and exercise regularly.

🚦 Food traffic lights

Choose

- A variety of vegetables, vegetable soup
- Low-fat milk, yoghurt and fresh cheese
- Eggs; white fish (hake, sea bream, sea bass)
- Pulses, wholegrains, mixed-grain bread (pão de mistura)
- Whole fresh fruit
- Water as your main drink; unsweetened coffee and tea

In moderation

- Red meat and game: small portions, a few times a week
- Oily fish (sardines, mackerel, anchovies) and shellfish: in moderation
- Chicken and turkey: moderate portions
- Wine: a little, with meals
- Honey and very sweet fruit in large amounts

Avoid / rarely

- Offal: liver, kidney, gizzards, tripe (dobrada)
- Large amounts of shellfish (seafood platters, clams, prawns, mussels)
- Beer and spirits (aguardente, medronho, whisky)
- Fizzy drinks, carton juices, nectars, drinks with fructose or glucose-fructose syrup
- Concentrated meat stocks and extracts
- Very heavy meals and big feasts

🍽️ A balanced day — example

Breakfast	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	Drinks
Mixed-grain bread with fresh cheese, low-fat milk or yoghurt, 1 piece of fruit	Vegetable soup; grilled hake or sea bream with boiled potatoes and broccoli; fruit	Low-fat plain yoghurt and a small handful of unsalted nuts	Grilled chicken or turkey (or an omelette) with rice and salad; fruit	Water throughout the day; unsweetened coffee or tea

📞 Contact your doctor if…

- Red, hot, swollen and very painful joint (gout attack)
- Joint pain with fever → go to A&E
- Renal colic, blood in the urine
- Skin rash after starting allopurinol → stop and call at once

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🔄 Easy swaps

INSTEAD OF…	CHOOSE…
✗ A beer (imperial or mini) after work	✓ Sparkling water with lemon, or unsweetened iced tea
✗ Frequent seafood platter or seafood rice	✓ Grilled white fish or fish cataplana, occasionally
✗ Liver (iscas), gizzards, tripe	✓ Eggs, skinless chicken or pulses
✗ Fizzy drink or carton juice	✓ Water, or whole fruit
✗ Large steak at dinner	✓ Small portion of meat with more vegetables

💊 Medicines and products: take care!

- 💧 **Diuretics** (hydrochlorothiazide, chlortalidone, furosemide) raise uric acid. Don't stop them: your doctor may switch to another medicine if possible.
- 🩺 For blood pressure or cholesterol, your doctor may prefer medicines that also lower uric acid (e.g. losartan, fenofibrate).
- 🔥 **During a gout attack**: treat early. If you have kidney disease, low-dose colchicine or a steroid is preferred to **anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs)** — don't self-medicate.
- 📏 **Allopurinol**: starts at a low dose and is increased gradually, especially if you have kidney disease.
- ❤️ **Low-dose aspirin** prescribed for your heart: **don't stop it** because of uric acid.
- 💊 **Vitamin C tablets**: not recommended to lower uric acid.
- ⏸️ **Allopurinol/febuxostat**: **don't stop during an attack**; attacks may be more frequent in the first months, so your doctor may add preventive medication.
- 🌿 **Supplements and teas "for uric acid"**: no proven benefit; they do not replace treatment.

🏃 Lifestyle

⚖️ Weight
Lose weight gradually if you are overweight.

🚶 Exercise
Regular activity: ≥ 150 min a week, adapted to your joints.

🍷 Alcohol
The less the better; avoid beer and spirits.

🚭 Smoking
Quitting protects your heart and kidneys.

💧 Water
Water as your main drink, throughout the day.

🩺 Heart and kidneys
Control blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol: high uric acid often comes with them.

⚡ Gout attack: what to do

- Start the treatment your doctor gave you **as early as possible** (within the first hours).
- Rest the joint and apply ice (wrapped in a cloth), 15–20 minutes at a time.
- If you already take **allopurinol or febuxostat, do not stop** during the attack.
- Fever, a very hot and red joint, or no improvement in 2–3 days: contact your doctor.

🥩 Purines and fructose in foods

⚪ Little effect
- Low-fat dairy (milk, yoghurt)
- Eggs
- Vegetables and whole fruit
- Cereals, bread, rice, pasta
- Water

⚪ Moderate
- Red meat
- Chicken and turkey
- Sardines, mackerel, anchovies
- Wine

⚪ More effect: avoid
- Offal and shellfish
- Meat stocks and extracts
- Beer and spirits
- Fizzy drinks, juices and nectars (fructose)

References (sources of these recommendations):

1. Richette P et al. 2016 updated EULAR evidence-based recommendations for the management of gout. Ann Rheum Dis. 2017;76:29–42.
2. FitzGerald JD et al. 2020 American College of Rheumatology Guideline for the Management of Gout. Arthritis Care Res. 2020;72:744–760.
3. KDIGO 2024 Clinical Practice Guideline for the Evaluation and Management of CKD. Kidney Int. 2024;105(4S):S117–S314.
4. 2024 ESC Guidelines for the management of elevated blood pressure and hypertension. Eur Heart J. 2024;45:3912–4018.

This leaflet is for information only and does not replace individual advice from your doctor or dietitian. Targets should be personalised. Do not change or stop any medicine without talking to your doctor.