



## RESEARCH NEWS

# Diet high in vegetables, fruit, and whole grains may reduce risk of gout

Susan Mayor

London

Eating a diet high in fruit, vegetables, and whole grains and low in salt, sugary drinks, and red meat is associated with a lower risk of gout than a typical Western diet, a long term follow-up study has found.<sup>1</sup>

Gout is the most common inflammatory arthritis and is caused by hyperuricemia. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet has been shown to reduce uric acid levels in the blood, as well as reducing blood pressure.

Researchers followed up 44 444 men with no history of gout at baseline, assessing incidence of gout over 26 years from 1986 to 2012. They compared the risk of gout in men eating a DASH-type diet with those eating a more Western-style diet.

Each participant was given a DASH score based on high intake of fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, low fat dairy products, and whole grains, as well as low intake of salt, sweetened beverages, and red and processed meats. They also received a Western pattern diet score based on red and processed meats, French fries, refined grains, sweets, and desserts.

The results, reported in *The BMJ*,<sup>1</sup> showed that men with a diet in the top fifth of DASH scores had a 32% lower risk of developing gout than those with the lowest DASH scores (adjusted relative risk 0.68 (95% confidence interval 0.57 to 0.80); P for trend <0.001).

In contrast, a higher Western dietary pattern was associated with a significantly increased risk for gout (1.42 (1.16 to 1.74); P=0.005). These dietary associations were independent of known risk factors for gout, such as age, body mass index, high blood pressure, and alcohol and coffee intake.

The study authors, led by Hyon Choi, of Harvard Medical School in Boston, USA, acknowledged that the study was observational, which limits interpretation of potential cause and effect. But they said that the DASH diet “may provide an attractive preventive dietary approach for the risk of gout.”

They suggested that the findings also provide support for intervention studies to examine the effects of the DASH diet on blood uric acid level in gout patients, as well as for reducing the risk of gout flares.



1 Rai SK, Fung TT, Lu N, et al. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, Western diet, and risk of gout in men: prospective cohort study. *BMJ* 2017. doi:10.1136/bmj.j11794.

Published by the BMJ Publishing Group Limited. For permission to use (where not already granted under a licence) please go to <http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions>