



Gout: Painful and Swollen Joints

Gout is an inflammatory disease of the joints. It is a result of uric acid deposition in our joints as crystals should our body produce too much of it. The uric acid crystals will induce joint inflammation causing pain. Some patients have no visible symptoms, but a blood test may detect elevated levels of uric acid in the blood. In the case of patients with symptoms, in the early stages usually only one joint is affected, typically the big toe, knee or ankle. The affected joint will suddenly turn red, swollen, and acutely painful. In severe cases, joints may become deformed, and the patient may be unable to return to work. Excessive uric acid may also deposit to other parts of the body such as the kidneys and skin. If the kidneys become affected, the results can be serious.^[1]

People at High Risk of Gout

Uric acid is the metabolite of purine which some food items are rich in. Owing to genetic predisposition, certain people are more prone to produce excess uric acid and hence gouty attack if they eat excessive purine-rich food. Occurrence of gout is also affected by age, sex, genetic disposition and dietary habits. People at high risk of gout include:^[2]

- ★ those aged over 40, especially male
- ★ those with family history of gout
- ★ over consumption of purine-rich food or beverages, such as offal, seafood and alcohol
- ★ those who have kidney disease or take diuretics

Herbal Remedies to Relieve Pain

Gout cannot be completely cured. But proper medication and dietary restrictions can lower the risk of recurrent attacks. Herbal remedies with gooseberry or tart cherry have been used by traditional physicians to treat joint pain and to relieve inflammation symptoms of gout patients.^[3]

~ Amalaki Indian Gooseberry ~

Indian Gooseberry is known as “Amla” in Hindi and “Amalaki” in Sanskrit, meaning “the nurse”. Amalaki fruits have traditionally been used in Ayurvedic (traditional Indian) medicine and are included in herbal preparations. The fruits are reputed to contain large amount of vitamin C, with juices containing nearly 20 and 160 times as much vitamin C as in orange and apple juice respectively.^[4] Amalaki fruit is also a rich source of polyphenolic compounds, potassium, calcium and amino acids.^[4-6]

The inflammatory process, which in joints is induced by uric acid accumulation and may ultimately lead to gout, was reported to be associated with the generation of reactive oxygen species (ROS).^[7] Various researches using Amalaki suggested that components in the fruit could inhibit pro-oxidizing and pro-inflammatory factors.^[8,9] Vitamin C is one of the powerful antioxidants in Amalaki. Remarkably, properties of vitamin C is preserved by other antioxidants in the fruit, thus ensuring its effectiveness on scavenging ROS and cell-protecting ability.^[9]

Polyphenolic compounds in the diet help low density lipoprotein (LDL) to resist against oxidation, while evidence exists that LDL oxidation promotes inflammatory responses.^[10] Gallic acid contained in Amalaki is a polyphenolic compound which has been proven to suppress inflammatory factors.^[6,11] Together, constituents of Amalaki provide resistance against joint inflammation and oxidation and thus lower the risk of gout.

~ Tart Cherry~

Tart cherry, also called sour cherry, contains antioxidizing anthocyanins, which provide the distinctive red color of the fruit. In addition, it also contains other bioflavonoids such as chlorogenic acid, gallic acid, p-coumaric acid and quercetin.^[12] Tart cherry anthocyanins possess a wide range of biochemical and pharmacological effects and have been recommended as healthy nutritional supplements.

The predominant mechanism of their biological actions is thought to result from anti-oxidant activity, enzyme inhibition, and the capacity to scavenge free radicals and reduce lipid peroxidation.^[13] Elevated levels of uric acid are associated with the onset and progression of gout. Consumption of tart cherries in diet has been shown to lower blood levels of uric acid and alleviate pain of arthritis and gout.^[14]

Combination of Amalaki Indian Gooseberry and Tart Cherry could:

- ★ provide strong antioxidants^[4,9,12]
- ★ supply essential nutrients for the body^[4-6]
- ★ help reduce blood uric acid level^[14]
- ★ relieve symptoms of gout and arthritis^[14]
- ★ alleviate inflammatory response^[8,11]
- ★ speed up muscle recovery after exercise^[15]

Recommended daily dose:

For adults, take 1-2 capsules daily with meals or as directed by physicians.

References:

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