Your Monthly Update

Dear Colleague

Welcome to the November newsletter from Pure Bio Ltd.

Did you know. . .?

The General Medical Council has come up with new practice guidelines that recommend for the first time that the doctor work with the patient!
This ground-breaking idea is contained in the GMC's new edition of Good Medical Practice. It is made following two years of intensive research, which involved interviewing more than 500 doctors and patients, and after holding five major public meetings around the country.
(Source: British Medical Journal, 2006; 333: 513).

Our topic for this month is GOUT

Gout

Ranking	Nutritional Supplements	Botanical Medicine
Secondary	Vitamin C	
Other	Folic acid Quercetin	Colchicine from autumn crocus Devil's Claw

Primary – Reliable and relatively consistent scientific data showing a substantial health benefit.

Secondary – Contradictory, insufficient, or preliminary studies suggesting a health benefit or minimal health benefit.

Other – An herb is primarily supported by traditional use, or the herb or supplement has little scientific support and/or minimal health benefit.

The Facts

The first sign is commonly an aching, throbbing, and exquisitely painful big toe. Usually the afflicted joint is swollen, red, and tender and, if the attack continues, the victim can develop fever and chills.

***Most gout victims are male*. In fact nearly 90 percent of people who suffer from gout are men over the age of thirty. But women are not immune, particularly if they are taking medications, such as those for hypertension that can predispose them to the condition.**

The main cause of gout is the formation of uric acid crystals in the joints, skin, and kidneys. Uric acid is an end product of the body's chemical processes. Those affected by gout have a higher level of uric acid in the blood than the normal, due either to formation of increased amounts or reduced amounts of acid being passed out by the kidneys in the urine. This uric acid usually remains dissolved in the blood. But when the blood becomes too full of it, the uric acid forms needle-shaped crystals in the joints which bring about attacks of gout.

Other causes of gout are heredity, alcoholic drinks, regular eating of foods rich in protein and carbohydrate, lack of proper exercise, and stress.

Dietary Modification

Foods that are high in compounds called purines raise uric acid levels in the body and increase the risk of gout. Restricting purine intake can reduce the risk of an attack in people susceptible to gout. Foods high in purines include:

anchovies, bouillon, brains, broth, consommé, dried legumes, goose, gravy, heart, herring, kidneys, liver, mackerel, meat extracts, mincemeat, mussels, partridge, fish roe, sardines, scallops, shrimp, sweetbreads, baker's yeast, brewer's yeast, and yeast extracts (e.g., Marmite, Vegemite).

Elimination of these foods from the diet should be accompanied by an increase in fruits and vegetables, as these will reduce the acidity of both tissue and urine and decrease the likelihood of uric acid build-up.

Avoiding alcohol, particularly beer, or limiting alcohol intake to one drink per day or less may reduce the number of attacks of gout. Refined sugars, including sucrose (white table sugar) and fructose (the sugar found in fruit juice), should also be restricted, because they have been reported to raise uric acid levels.

Gout Diet

Raw vegetable juices are used for gout treatment. Carrot juice, in combination with the juices of beet and cucumber, is especially valuable. Beet juice - 100 ml and cucumber juice - 100 ml should be mixed with 300 ml of carrot juice to make 500 ml of combined juice and taken daily.

The juice of French or string beans has also proved effective in treating gout. About 150 ml of this juice should be taken daily by the patient suffering from this disease.

Bananas have been found beneficial in the treatment of gout. A diet of bananas only for three or four days is advised for providing some relief from gout. A patient can take eight or nine bananas daily during this period and nothing else.

According to a 1950 study of 12 people with gout, eating one-half pound of cherries or drinking an equivalent amount of cherry juice prevented attacks of gout. Black, sweet yellow, and red sour cherries were all effective. Since that study, there have been many anecdotal reports of cherry juice as an effective treatment for the pain and inflammation of gout. The active ingredient in cherry juice remains unknown.

For an acute attack, the best remedy is a fast of orange juice and water. In severe cases, it is advisable to undertake a series of short fasts for three days or so rather than one long fast.

After the acute symptoms subside, adopt an all fruit diet for another three or four days.

Thereafter, embark upon a well-balanced diet of natural foods, with emphasis on fresh fruits, raw vegetables, and sprouts.

A warm-water enema **should be used daily during the period of fasting to cleanse the bowels.**

Epsom salts foot baths **are advised twice daily. About 250 – 500 g of salts should be added to tolerably hot water. Full Epsom salts baths should also be taken three times a week. The baths may be reduced to two per week once the acute episode subsides.**

Lifestyle Modification

People who are overweight or have high blood pressure are at greater risk of developing gout. However, weight loss should not be rapid because restriction of calories can increase uric acid levels temporarily, which may aggravate the condition.

Drinking adequate amounts of water is important**. Water dilutes urine and lessens the chance of uric acid crystals forming; and also helps to prevent the formation of kidney stones. About 10 to 20 percent of gout victims develop kidney stones, so trying to prevent them before they form is important.**

Stress can exacerbate gout**. Stress control through exercise and stress-reduction techniques is an important aspect of controlling symptoms.**

Vitamin A in large amounts can exacerbate gout**. Dosage should not exceed 5,000 I.U. daily. During an acute attack vitamin A intake should be excluded altogether.**

Niacin can also raise uric acid levels and thus aggravate gout**. Dosage should be restricted to no more than 100 mg. daily.**

Nutritional Supplement Treatment Options

Folic Acid - Large amounts of supplemental folic acid (up to 80 mg per day) have reduced uric acid levels in preliminary research.

Vitamin C - In one small study, people who took 4 grams of vitamin C (but not lower amounts) had an increase in urinary excretion of uric acid within a few hours, and those who took 8 grams of vitamin C per day for several days had a reduction in serum uric acid levels. Thus, supplemental vitamin C could, in theory, reduce the risk of gout attacks. However, there is a risk that taking large amounts of vitamin C could also trigger an acute attack of gout by abruptly changing uric acid levels in the body. Another study showed that taking lower amounts of vitamin C (500 mg per day) for two months significantly reduced blood levels of uric acid, especially in people whose initial uric acid levels were elevated. For people with a history of gout attacks, it seems reasonable to begin vitamin C supplementation at 500 mg per day, and to increase the amount gradually if uric acid levels do not decrease.

Quercitin - In *in vitro* studies, quercetin has inhibited an enzyme involved in the development of gout. Recommended dosage is 150–250 mg of quercetin TID (taken between meals).

Botanical Treatment Options

Autumn crocus *(Colchicum autumnale)* is the herb from which colchicine was originally isolated. Colchicine, a strong anti-inflammatory compound, is used as a conventional treatment for gout. Both the herb and the drug have significant toxicity and should only be used under the guidance of a practitioner.

Devil's Claw **(Harpagophytum procumbens) is an herbaceous perennial used not only for its analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties; but has also been shown in research to reduce cholesterol and high uric acid levels.**

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