Sweet Cherry Extract for Real Results with Gout

KEY WORDS

- gout, uric acid, inflammation
- sweet cherries, tart cherries, cherry juice, Cox 1, Cox 2, diabetes, Freeze dried cherry fruit extract, glucose metabolism, heart, insulin resistance, pain, tophi, blood sugar, cholesterol, gouty arthritis

The Serious Pain of Gout

They call it “The Rich Man’s Disease” because, historically, only wealthy people could afford to eat the rich foods – especially red meat, refined sugar, and alcohol – associated with gout attacks. But today, we are blessed, and cursed, with an overabundance of nutrition. Gout is on the rise. And the culprit? Uric acid. Uric acid is a natural substance that is produced in our bodies. The problems arise when either there is too much uric acid produced (about 10% of cases), or an individual does not effectively eliminate the normal amounts of uric acid that are produced (about 90% of cases).

But whatever the cause, attacks of gout can cause excruciating pain and greatly limited mobility. For many, the big toe is one of the first joints affected, and some have told me that the toe hurts so badly they cannot even stand to have a sheet touch their foot. Fortunately, there are some natural interventions that can be tremendously effective. There’s been a lot of talk about cherry extracts to help with gout and relieve joint inflammation lately, but along with that there has been a lot of well-intended – but misguided – advice about which type of cherry provides the best benefits – sweet vs. tart. The fact is, only sweet cherries have studies showing real benefits for people suffering from gout. And that is the topic of this Terry Talks Nutrition®.

About Gout

Very high uric acid levels – called hyperuricemia – are associated with gout, though not everyone with above-normal uric acid levels develops gout. So how does uric acid lead to gout? At normal levels, uric acid is dissolved in the blood stream. In gout-prone individuals, when uric acid levels get high enough they start to form crystals with needle like projections that get stuck in the joints. The body responds with inflammation, and the area becomes swollen and inflamed. Sometimes there are so many crystals collected in one place that they form tophi, irregular lumps that further impede joint movement. Tophi can be quite large and disfiguring.

Genetics, gender, and nutrition (sugar, alcoholism, obesity) play key roles in the development of gout. If your parents had gout, then you have a 20% chance of developing it. Other interesting statistics? British people are five times more likely to develop gout than others. African Americans, but not Africans, are more likely to have gout than other populations in the U.S.

Men and women may develop problems with gout at different ages. Uric acid levels increase at puberty in men and at menopause in women, so men often develop gout at an earlier age than do women (after menopause). Gout in women before the onset of menopause is very unusual.

Attacks of gouty arthritis can be brought on when there is a sudden change in uric acid levels, which may be caused by several things, including overindulgence in alcohol, refined sugars, rich red meats, starvation, dehydration, and even certain prescription drugs.

How to Prevent Attacks?

Recently, a study showed that drinking 8 eight ounce glasses of water a day can cut down gout attacks by almost half. The authors speculate that staying well-hydrated dilutes the circulating uric acid in the blood stream which is what triggers gout in the first place. [Neogi T, et al “Drinking water can reduce the risk of recurrent gout attacks: Abstract 2038” Arthritis Rheum. 2009; 60: S762-63.] Eliminating refined sugars can greatly reduce your gout attack risk. Sometimes even simple changes such as this can have profound health effects.

Another very effective natural intervention I highly recommend is the use of cherry fruit extract. I grew up with the old wives tale that several ounces of cherry juice a day can be used to eliminate the pain and inflammation of gout and arthritis. It turns out that in this case, the old wives know best!

Unfortunately, it is often difficult to consume enough cherries or drink enough juice on a regular basis. A great many people are turning to cherry supplements as the answer, but not all cherry supplements are equally effective. Only one form of preservation and extraction – freeze-drying – fully preserves the plant compounds needed by the body to reduce uric acid levels.

In fact, a great deal of research is going on at universities in the United States regarding the medicinal value of freeze dried cherries.

Why Freeze-Drying is Best

Drying is an ancient process used to preserve food. Unfortunately, the nutritional content in foods can be drastically altered or reduced when dried conventionally. This is why freeze-dried cherry fruit extract is superior. The absence

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of water combined with the low process temperature stops cellular deterioration, enzymatic activity, and microbiological reactions. I recommend only the freeze-dried form instead of cherries that have been dried by conventional hot air drying, spray drying, or sun drying. Freeze drying the cherry fruit retains the ideal phytochemical content, enzymatic activity, nutritional value and bioactivity of fresh sweet cherries. Freeze drying retains the highest level of antioxidants and flavor components, and has the longest shelf life of any known drying process. On the other hand, drum drying, a process similar to drying fruit in a clothes dryer, actually destroys 35% of the nutrients. Air drying or sun drying destroys 55% of nutrients. Spray drying, a method where liquid juice is sprayed through a nozzle into a chamber allowing the mist to fall to the bottom of the chamber and dry the fruit, destroys 70% of the nutrients.

Freeze dried cherry fruit extract packs the dynamic power of the cherry into a highly concentrated standardized extract.

**How Does Freeze-Dried, Sweet Cherry Work?**

The flavonoid compounds in cherries lower serum uric acid levels. Studies have also observed an acute reduction in C-reactive protein and nitric oxide levels, biomarkers of inflammatory response, after cherry consumption.

This special and unique extract is especially of interest because of its substantial amount of anthocyanins. This very powerful flavonoid, an active antioxidant, comes from the deep red and luscious color of the cherry’s pigmentation. Studies of cherries have suggested that anthocyanins promote healthy responses to inflammatory conditions and cellular proliferation (healthy reproduction of cells). It is also believed that anthocyanins protect the body against damaging effects of free radicals and the initiation of chronic diseases associated with the aging process.

Sweet cherries have been studied for their ability to inhibit the enzyme cyclooxygenase. In fact, they are the only type that has been studied for this purpose. Cyclooxygenase (Cox) is produced in the body in two different forms, Cox-1 and Cox-2. Cox-1 is associated with the creation of prostaglandins that send basic messages throughout the body. Cox-2 is only found in certain cells and functions as a messenger for pain and inflammatory signals throughout the body. Special anthocyanins are able to block Cox-1 and Cox-2 respectively – without any serious adverse effects.

**Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes**

Cherries are also heart healthy and help reduce your risk for Type 2 Diabetes. Studies have examined the benefits of Cox inhibition for the promotion of healthy cardiovascular systems. Results have indicated that Cox inhibition may slow the buildup of plaque in blood vessels. In one study, researchers examined the aortas of animals fed oxidized cholesterol for 16 weeks in the diet. Data showed that lesions were reduced by 55% in the animals also using cherry extracts, as compared to the control group.

Cherry anthocyanins have also been associated with a healthy inflammatory response. This is significant because scientists believe inflammation contributes to the buildup and eventual rupture of plaque on arterial walls. When plaque breaks open, clots can form that contribute to the development of cardiovascular complications. Sweet cherry fruit antioxidants have been reported to inhibit oxidized LDL cholesterol, a known contributor to the development of atherosclerosis.

Cherries also support healthy glucose metabolism. Science has suggested that anthocyanins may be associated with reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. Studies have shown that diets rich in fruit and vegetable antioxidants can reduce the risk of obesity and insulin resistance. Other studies have suggested cherry anthocyanin activity helps reduce insulin resistance. Animal cells that were treated with anthocyanins from cherries increased insulin production up to 50% compared to unexposed cells. This same study determined that, though anthocyanins are found in many other fruits, freeze dried cherry fruit extract provides one of the highest concentrations based on serving size.

**Sweet Cherry Fruit Extract – Tested to Be the Best!**

So making some changes to daily food choices, adding clinically-studied freeze-dried sweet cherry extract rich in anthocyanins, and drinking 8 glasses of water a day can dramatically reduce gout symptoms – and improve your overall health in the process.

Additionally, freeze dried sweet cherry fruit extract promotes a whole host of other health benefits, too, including healthy LDL levels, preventing the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, promoting cardiovascular health, supporting healthy glucose metabolism, reducing pain and inflammation, and improving joint flexibility. It even makes your brain healthier!™

Terry recommends a product with this ingredient.

Sweet Cherry (Prunus avium) 1500 mg Freeze Dried Extract standardized to contain > 0.7% anthocyanins

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