



GOUT

Women, Weight, and Gout

Gout is typically seen as a “man’s disease”—but women get gout, too. And over the last 2 decades, the incidence of gout (which is a form of inflammatory arthritis) has been on the rise in both genders.

Not surprising, since gout is twice as prevalent among men, studies of gout have focused on men. But those that have included women have not examined the association between weight and gout, say researchers from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland; Freiburg University Hospital in Freiburg, Germany; and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For their study, they hypothesized that women

who put on weight in early-to-mid adult life would have a greater risk of gout.

Comparing data on 6,263 women in the ongoing Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study, the researchers found that, indeed, regardless of age, obesity at baseline nearly tripled the risk of developing gout. Over the 9 years of follow-up, 106 women (4.6%) developed gout by age 70. Risk factors for gout included older age, black race, greater body mass index (BMI) at baseline and at age 25, higher waist-to-hip ratio, greater weight gain, and diabetes. Only 13% of the women with gout were of normal weight (BMI < 25 kg/m²) compared with 40% of the women without gout.

The cumulative incidence of gout

rose with each higher category of BMI at baseline: The highest incidence (12%) was among women whose BMI at baseline was ≥ 35 kg/m². Women with a waist-to-hip ratio in the highest tertile had more than twice the risk of gout of those in the leanest tertile, even after adjusting for potential confounders.

The clinical implications are clear, especially for younger women. Gaining ≥ 16.3 kg (about 36 lb) between baseline and age 25 quadrupled the risk of incident gout. Even being overweight, not obese, was a risk factor: Gaining just 15 lb in her 20s could double a woman’s risk of gout. ●

Source: Maynard JW, McAdams Demarco MA, Baer AN, et al. *Am J Med.* 2012;125(7):717.e9-e17.
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