Can a Plant-Based Diet Prevent Gout? Transcript

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Plant-Based Diets and Gout Risk

Can a plant-based diet help prevent gout? Well, it depends on the type of plant based diet.

Study Design and Healthy Plant Foods

This new prospective cohort study included data from the Harvard Nurses Health Study and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study, including over 120,000 participants who were followed since the 1980s and who had their diet, lifestyle, and health information collected every two to four years.

They found that those with the highest Healthy Plant-Based Diet Index scores had a 21% lower risk of developing gouts compared to those the lowest scores.

And for context, higher scores reflect diets that are rich in healthy plant foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and are relatively low in animal foods and those less healthy plants foods, like sugary drinks and pastries.

However, those with the highest unhealthy plant-based diet index scores, so those eating more of those, less-healthy plant food and less of the healthy foods.

Unhealthy Plant Foods and Gout Risk

actually had a 17% higher risk. As for individual foods, each serving of whole grains consumed per day was associated with a 7% lower risk, while each of tea or coffee was a 5% risk lower.

And for animal foods only dairy was lower, with 14% reduction per daily serving.

Individual Foods Linked to Lower or Higher Risk

On the other hand, each daily serving of fish was associated with a 26% higher risk, while each serving fruit juice and sugar sweetened beverages were associated a 6% and 16% risk respectively.

Those results were generally in line with previous research, but there were also some unexpected findings. They found that vegetable oils and animal fats were each associated with a higher risk, while desserts were actually associated a lower risk and fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and refined grains were not significantly associated risk one way or another.

Unexpected Findings and Need for Further Research

Now, the authors do note that it's important to study these findings further and see if they are replicated in future research, but they're interesting nonetheless.

And it's also important to consider how broad the categories are. For example, it is possible that some types of fruits increase risk while others decrease risk, which is just something else we'd have to delve a little deeper into.