**Gout risk increased by 'Western diet' of red meat, fries and sweets, study suggests**

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* [0 comments](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/gout-risk-increase-western-diet-red-meat-fries-sweets-dash-diet-arthritic-a7727801.html#commentsDiv)

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Painful arthritic condition can be avoided by high fruit, vegetable, nut and legume intake

Gout is often associated with [Henry VIII](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/henry-viii-fragments-of-kings-tudor-royal-residence-found-in-english-country-church-a6913046.html) and a decadent, meat-heavy diet – but modern eating habits in Western countries could also cause the painful condition, researchers have said.

A so-called “Western diet”, which includes a high intake of [red and processed meat](http://www.independent.co.uk/topic/processed-meat), sugary treats and fried food such as chips, can lead to tender, swollen joints, according to a new study published in the*British Medical Journal* (BMJ).

But people whose diet is rich in fruit, vegetables and whole grains have a lower risk of gout, found the researchers.

Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis, occurring most often in the joint at the base of the big toe. It affects one to two of every 100 people in the UK.

Experts from the US and Canada analysed data on more than 44,000 men aged 40 to 75 with no previous history of gout.

During 26 years of follow-up, the men completed detailed food questionnaires every four years.

They were given scores based on their dietary styles and how much they adhered to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet – which has been designed to reduce blood pressure.

The DASH diet includes high intake of fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes, such as peas, beans and lentils, low-fat dairy products and whole grains, and low intake of salt, sweetened beverages, and red and processed meats.

Overall, 1,731 men developed gout during the follow-up period.

The researchers found a higher DASH score was associated with a lower risk for gout, while a higher score for a Western diet was associated with an increased risk for gout.

“The DASH diet may provide an attractive preventive dietary approach for men at risk of gout,” the authors concluded.