



THE HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS INFORMATION SERVICE COMMENTS ON VITAMIN C AND GOUT

Men with a higher vitamin C intake seem to be less likely to develop gout, according to a report in the March 9 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*.¹

Researchers working in British Columbia, Vancouver, examined the relationship between vitamin C intake and gout between 1986 and 2006 in 46,994 men. Every two years, participants reported whether they had been diagnosed with gout, or had developed symptoms of the condition.

During 20 years of follow-up, 1,317 men developed gout. Compared with men who had a vitamin C intake of less than 250 milligrams per day, the relative risk of gout was 17 percent lower for those with a daily intake of 500 to 999 milligrams, 34 percent lower for those with an intake of 1,000 to 1,499 milligrams per day and 45 percent lower for those with an intake of 1,500 milligrams per day or higher. For every 500-milligram increase in their vitamin C intake, the men's risk for gout appeared to decrease by 17 percent. Compared with men who did not take vitamin C supplements, those who took 1,000 to 1,499 supplemental milligrams per day had a 34 percent lower risk of gout and those who took 1,500 supplemental milligrams per day had a 45 percent lower risk.

Commenting on the study, Dr Ruxton, scientific advisor to the Health Supplements Information Service notes: "Gout is caused by a build-up of uric acid in the blood and vitamin C appears to reduce the levels of uric acid in the blood. When uric acid builds up, it can form crystal deposits in and around the joints, which is what causes the pain and inflammation typical of the condition. In their paper, the researchers suggest that vitamin C might affect the reabsorption of uric acid by the kidneys, increase the speed at which the

¹Choi, HK et al. *Arch Intern Med.* 2009;169[5]:502-507

kidneys work, or protect against inflammation; all of which can reduce the risk of gout.

“Given the general safety profile associated with vitamin C, a high intake of vitamin C may provide one useful option in helping to prevent gout.”

The Health Supplements Information Service: The Health Supplements Information Service is supported by a restricted educational grant from the Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB). HSIS has been created to provide media with impartial information regarding the health benefits of vitamins and minerals. Experts advising the service include nutritionists; dieticians and doctors. For further information please call 020 7052 8955.

FACT: Gout, a condition that results in acute attacks of arthritis in the joints, is becoming more common. A recent report suggested that, in the UK, it had increased by about 17 percent between 2007 and 2008. Traditionally, gout has most commonly developed in middle aged and older people - mostly men – but the condition is now being seen in younger people and also more frequently in women. The reasons for this increase are unclear but it may be linked with dietary change and obesity seems to increase the risk of gout.

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Note: The reference nutrient intake for vitamin C is 40mg/d for men

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