

# NUTRIGRAM

**September 2010** published by the  
**Niagara County Office for the Aging 438-4020**

111 Main Street Lockport NY 14094



## **Eat Well... Stay Well Dining and Home Delivered Meal Menus on the Internet**

If you have computer access or if a family member does, please take a look at the Niagara County web site – [www.niagaracounty.com](http://www.niagaracounty.com). Look under Departments and then click on Aging and go to nutrition programs. There you can find the menus for the month, the newsletter, information about services of the Office from the Aging and NY Connects, Long Term Care, nutrition information, healthy recipes, important links and much more.

## **September is Arthritis Awareness Month**

### **What Is Gout?**

Gout is a disease that causes the sudden onset of intense pain and swelling in the joints, which also may be warm and red. Attacks frequently occur at night and can be triggered by stressful events, alcohol or drugs, or the presence of another illness.

Before an attack, needle-like crystals of uric acid build up in connective tissue, in the joint space between two bones, or in both.

Uric acid is a substance that results from the breakdown of purines, which are part of all human tissue and are found in many foods. Early attacks usually subside within 3 to 10 days, even without treatment, and the next attack may not occur for months or even years.

Adult men, particularly those between the ages of 40 and 50, are more likely to develop gout than women, who rarely develop the disease before menstruation ends.

Sometime during the course of the disease, many patients will develop gout in the big toe. Gout frequently affects joints in the lower part

of the body such as the ankles, heels, knees, or toes.

### **Causes and Risk Factors**

Researchers have discovered some of the risk factors for gout. Some people with gout have a family history of the disease. In addition to inherited traits, diet, weight, and alcohol play a role in the development of gout. The disease is more common in men.

Most people with gout have too much uric acid in their blood, a condition called hyperuricemia. The extra uric acid moves from the blood to the joints, which may trigger the inflammation seen in gout.

### **Symptoms and Diagnosis**

Different types of arthritis have different symptoms. In general, people with most forms of arthritis have pain and stiffness in their joints. Gout typically attacks one joint at a time, and the attacks usually begin at night.

Hyperuricemia -- high levels of uric acid in the body -- contributes to arthritis that develops in one day, producing a swollen, red, and painful joint. Gout attacks usually begin at night.

Gout normally attacks joints in the lower part of the body, such as the knee, ankle or big toe. For many people the joints in the big toe are the first to be attacked. In fact, sometime during the course of the disease, many people will develop gout in the big toe.

### **From National Institute on Health web site**

Next month we will include an article on nutrition and arthritis.

Attention all: there will be no meals delivered to sites or for home delivery on Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, due to Labor Day.

