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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GOUT & URIC ACID EDUCATION SOCIETY SURVEY REVEALS AMERICANS
UNDERESTIMATE SERIOUS HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF GOUT**

***New Findings Along with Simplified Dietary Guidelines to Help Patients
Manage Flares Released for Gout Awareness Day, May 22***

New York, May 20, 2010 – The Gout & Uric Acid Education Society (GUAES) announced today that new survey results reveal that only 1 in 4 (28 percent) of Americans believe that [gout](#), a painful and potentially debilitating form of arthritis that affects 5 million Americans annually, can have a major negative impact on overall health and wellbeing. Yet, if left untreated the chronic health condition can progress to the point of being debilitating, with increased frequency of painful gout attacks, and destruction of the bone and cartilage and kidney damage. The online survey¹ was commissioned by GUAES and conducted by Harris Interactive in March 2010.

The study noted that 3 out of 5 Americans believe that rheumatoid arthritis can have a major negative impact on someone's overall health and well being. "Yet, advanced gout can lead to the same level of work loss, physical disability and diminished quality of life seen in advanced rheumatoid arthritis," said [N. Lawrence Edwards, M.D.](#), chairman of the Gout & Uric Acid Education Society and a specialist in rheumatology and professor of medicine at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

Gout is also associated with other serious health conditions including obesity, diabetes and cardiac problems. While gout is most common among men over age 40, post-menopausal women and those with a family history of gout are also at risk, and the number of Americans with gout has doubled over the past 30 years.

"Given these serious health consequences and risks, a combination of medication and lifestyle modifications is critical," Edwards cautioned. "Through compliance with these 'doctor's orders,' most patients can gain control of symptoms and continue to lead an active life."

Only 1 in 5 adults reported that they exercise regularly, eat right and drink alcohol in moderation or don't drink – all lifestyle modifications recommended for gout sufferers

and the associated diseases. “As the survey revealed, most people aren’t able to juggle all of the healthy habits, so we advise gout patients to tackle them one at a time,” Edwards said.

Updated Dietary Guidelines

Gout Awareness Day, on May 22, is focused on raising awareness about the important [role of diet in helping to tame the development of gout](#) and in introducing updated and simplified dietary guidelines. “We recommend that patients start by eliminating or reducing consumption of foods known to trigger gout flares,” Edwards said. Flares can be so agonizing that patients often seek relief at the emergency room.

“Making dietary changes to help manage disease resonates with Americans,” said nutritionist Madelyn Fernstrom, Ph.D., CNS. She noted that the study showed that 6 in 10 Americans believe that dietary modifications can make a difference in managing disease. “The revised dietary guidelines for gout are easy to incorporate into daily life. They focus on a healthy balanced diet rich in low fat/non-fat dairy products, nuts and vegetables while avoiding foods most likely to exacerbate the symptoms of gout such as red meat, shellfish and alcohol. These guidelines comprise a lifetime model for eating – whether or not you have gout,” Fernstrom added.

Updated dietary guidelines for gout management include:

1. Avoid red meat, shellfish and alcohol, especially beer – these are foods high in purine, a chemical that can contribute to an elevated uric acid level which can set the stage for a painful attack of gout. Uric acid is also a marker for diabetes and kidney disease.
2. Avoid foods with high sugar content including high-fructose corn syrup such as soft drinks, fruit juices and prepackaged baked goods. There is a growing body of evidence associating a diet high in fructose content with gout.
3. Eat a healthy, balanced diet including low fat or non-fat dairy products, nuts and vegetables.
4. Drink plenty of water.

Patients are encouraged to work closely with their healthcare professional to discuss dietary and lifestyle modifications appropriate to them and learn more about the types of foods they eat that may trigger a gout flare. Only 1 in 5 Americans correctly identified gout as one of the diseases that could be made worse by consuming foods containing high-fructose corn syrup. Awareness of high-purine foods is also low, with only 18 percent of Americans correctly identifying gout among the conditions that could be made worse by consuming foods such as shellfish and red meat.

“Obesity, untreated high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol are all risk factors for gout,” Edwards added, noting that many of the gout-friendly guidelines are also part of dietary modifications for these associated diseases.

The updated dietary guidelines and expanded information about lifestyle modifications are available on the new GUAES Web site, www.gouteducation.org. While on the site, patients may also request a free brochure with information about the disease, treatment options and lifestyle modifications. Click photo for brochure online order form. GUAES is also on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



About Gout

Gout is caused by an accumulation of sodium urate crystals in the joints and other tissues. These crystals form when there is an abnormally high level of uric acid in the blood (a condition known as hyperuricemia). Gout, which affects approximately 3-5 million Americans, is one of the most painful forms of arthritis and the most common form of inflammatory arthritis among adults. Patients describe the pain of an attack as one that rivals the fracture of long bones. Gout causes sudden intense pain and swelling in the joints. Following their first attack of gout, approximately 60 percent of patients will experience another attack within the first year. If gout is left untreated it can lead to permanent joint damage and destruction of tissue.

About the Gout & Uric Acid Education Society and Gout Awareness Day

Formed in September 2005, the Gout & Uric Acid Education Society has a comprehensive educational brochure, as well as a user-friendly Web site for patients, caregivers, family members and healthcare providers. For more information about gout and the Gout & Uric Acid Education Society, please visit www.gouteducation.org. Gout Awareness Day is sponsored by Ardea Biosciences, Inc., EnzymeRx, LLC., Novartis Pharmaceutical Corp; Savient Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Takeda Pharmaceuticals North America, Inc. and URL Pharma.

About the Survey

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of GUAES from March 22-24, 2010 among 2,283 adults age 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology including weighting variables, please contact Ellen Wein, Euro RSCG Worldwide PR, at (412) 456-0986 or ellen.wein@eurorscg.com on behalf of GUAES.

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