

Gout

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What is Gout?

Gout is a type of arthritis.
It can cause sudden pain, stiffness, and swelling in the joints usually known as a gout attack.
Gout is most commonly seen in men.



Gout attacks are usually seen in the small joint at the base of the big toe, but can affect other joints such as feet, ankles, knees, wrist, fingers, and elbows.

What causes Gout?

Gout is caused by too much uric acid in the blood. This is known as hyperuricemia. Uric acid is a breakdown product of purines that are part of many foods we eat.

When these levels are too high, uric acid can cause hard and painful crystals to form in the joints.



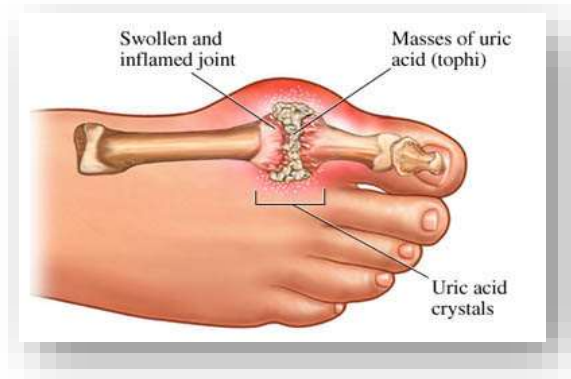
Your doctor can detect if you have gout by taking a sample of fluid from your joint to look for uric acid crystals or by drawing blood to measure the amount of uric acid in your blood.



Symptoms of Gout

Acute gout attacks are described as a rapid onset of pain in the affected joint followed by:

- Warmth
- Swelling
- Reddish Discoloration
- Obvious Tenderness
- This pain is often more intense at nighttime.



Risk Factors:



Painful attacks usually decrease in hours to days, with or without medication, especially with diet change.

In rare instances, an attack can last for weeks.

Most people with gout will experience repeated bouts of gouty arthritis over the years.

Some Foods to Avoid When You Have Gout Include:



Why Treat Gout?

If gout is not treated properly, damage can occur in your joints, tendons and other tissues. Painful attacks can also reoccur without treatment.

Treating Gout with Medications:

Certain medications reduce the pain and inflammation of gout attacks, such as anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen and others), colchicine, and corticosteroids. But use caution with anti-inflammatories because often if you have gout, it is a sign that your kidneys are slowing, and anti-inflammatories stress the kidney further. Just use anti-inflammatories briefly till gout is less painful.



Other medications decrease the level of uric acid in the blood and prevent the buildup of uric acid in joints (gouty arthritis), the kidneys (stones), and in tissue (tophi). This helps to prevent further attacks and complications. These medications include allopurinol, febuxostat, and probenecid.



Tips to Prevent Future Gout Attacks:

1. Control weight with daily exercise
2. Stay Hydrated by drinking lots of water
3. Limit consumption of red meat or seafood
4. Dairy consumption may reduce attacks
5. 1-2 servings of daily dairy or calcium recommended
6. Consume vegetables and nuts daily
7. Avoid alcohol
8. Maintaining adequate fluid intake
9. Avoid diuretic use unless you absolutely need them (for heart failure for example). Examples of diuretics (water pills) are- hydrochlorothiazide or furosemide.

