

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GOUT

In the Clinic
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What Is Gout?

Gout is a type of arthritis that causes swelling, redness, and severe pain in joints like the big toe. It happens when there is too much uric acid in your body. Uric acid can form painful crystals in the joints. Although anyone can get gout, you are more likely to get it if you:

- Have high uric acid levels
- Are male
- Are an older adult
- Are obese
- Take certain medicines, such as water pills
- Eat certain foods, like red meat and organ meat (liver)
- Drink alcohol and sugary drinks, like soda sugar-sweetened juice
- Have certain health conditions, like kidney failure, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- Have had a kidney transplant



What Are the Warning Signs of Gout?

The signs and symptoms of gout usually happen suddenly, without warning, and at night. This is called a "flare" or "attack." Signs of a flare include:

- Severe joint pain, often in the big toe
- Joint pain in other parts of your feet and in your ankles, knees, hands, and wrists
- Swelling, redness, stiffness, and tenderness in the affected joints
- Pain is most severe in the first 24 hours. Gout flares can last 1 to 2 weeks.

How Is Gout Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and examine your joints.
- He or she may take a small sample of fluid from an affected joint to look for signs of gout crystals under a microscope.
- Blood tests and imaging tests, like X-rays or ultrasounds, can also help your doctor learn more about your symptoms.

How Is Gout Treated?

- Treatment for a gout flare will start with medicines that lower your pain and stop the

flare. This can include medicines like ibuprofen.

- Some people may need more treatment. If you have a history of repeated gout flares, nodules from gout crystals, a history of kidney stones, or kidney problems, your doctor should prescribe medicines that help lower uric acid levels. This will help prevent future flares and complications, such as joint damage.
- Lifestyle changes can also help. These include losing weight if you are overweight, avoiding certain foods, limiting alcoholic drinks, and drinking lots of water.
- Your doctor may refer you to a specialist if you need more treatment.

Questions for My Doctor

- What treatment is best for me?
- When will my symptoms go away?
- Will gout damage my joints?
- Should I avoid certain foods and drinks?
- Do any of my medicines increase my uric acid levels?
- Can I take a pain killer?
- When I have a flare, are there any activities I should avoid?
- What can happen if my gout is not treated?
- How can I reduce my future risk for flares?

For More Information



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ACP

www.acponline.org/patient_ed/rheumatology

American College of Rheumatology

www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Gout

Arthritis Foundation

www.arthritis.org/about-arthritis/types/gout/