

WHAT IS GOUT?

Gout is the Most Common Form of Inflammatory Arthritis

Seven out of 10 Americans Don't Know Gout is a Type of Arthritis

Gout is a form of arthritis characterized by sudden, severe attacks of pain, redness and tenderness in joints, most often at the base of the big toe. Although more common in men, gout can affect anyone and women are more likely to develop gout after menopause. What causes gout? How is it diagnosed and treated? The following summary will provide the answers to these questions.

01 | The Cause of Gout and its Symptoms

Gout is one of the most painful forms of arthritis and occurs when too much uric acid builds up in the body. For many, the first attack occurs in the big toe, and will cause the toe to be sore, red, warm and swollen.

Normally, uric acid dissolves in the blood. When the uric acid levels remain high and crystalize, gout can develop. Some risk factors include:

- Diet
- Obesity
- Excessive alcohol use
- Organ transplant recipient
- Certain medications (diuretics, aspirin, cyclosporine, levodopa, niacin)
- Lead exposure

02 | Diagnosing Gout

In order for your medical provider to diagnose gout, he/she will need your medical history, and will need to examine the affected joint. The physician will likely perform the following tests to make a positive diagnosis:

- **Joint fluid test** – to look for urate crystals
- **Blood test** – to measure the levels of uric acid and creatinine in your blood
- **X-ray imaging** – to rule out other causes of joint inflammation

03 | Treating Gout

As an initial treatment, your medical provider may give you an injection of corticosteroid to reduce inflammation and provide relief of symptoms. He is also likely to prescribe anti-inflammatory pain relievers and/or corticosteroids as well as xanthine oxidase inhibitors to block uric acid production or probenecid to remove uric acid from the body.

It is also important to make changes at home that can improve symptoms. These include:

- Limit alcohol and sugary drinks
- Limit intake of red meats, organ meats and seafood
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight

For additional information on gout, please visit the Arthritis Foundation: <http://www.arthritis.org/about-arthritis/types/gout/>

***Did You Know?**
Gout affects 8.3 million
Americans*

References

<http://www.webmd.com/arthritis/gout-directory>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gout/basics/definition/con-20019400>

https://www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/gout/gout_ff.asp