



Gout

Podiatry Service

Your local
healthcare
provider

What is gout?

Gout is a recurring inflammatory reaction due to the overproduction of monosodium urate crystals that accumulate and deposit into joints.

Gout is more common in men with an estimated 1-2 % of the world's population affected by gout.

The big toe joint (first metatarsophalangeal joint) is the joint most commonly affected by gout followed by fingers, wrists, elbows and knees.

60% of patients who experience a gout attack will have a second attack within one year. Gout does not cause lasting damage to joints if treated.

Gout often presents as a red, hot, painful, swollen joint without trauma. This can lead to difficulty wearing shoes and pain when walking.

Causes of gout?

Purines found in cells of the body and in the food we eat such as red meat, red wine, brandy and rich sauces is converted to uric acid. It is this uric acid that can crystalize.

Most people with gout have high levels of urate in their blood. This can be due to diet and lifestyle such as crash dieting, stress, illness and some medication. There may also be a genetic predisposition.

Diagnosis

When a suspected gout flare up occurs it is often diagnosed using the clinical presentation listed above.

A blood test to look at the bodies urate levels.

Aspiration of the joint (using a needle to remove some of the joint fluid) can be used to look for the presence of urate crystals.

Treatment

Acute - when the joint becomes red, swollen and painful pain killers and non steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDS) drugs are advised as soon as possible as well as immobilizing the joint (keeping off it as much as possible).

Your doctor may prescribed steroids to reduce the inflammation or a tablet called Colchicine which is an anti-gout tablet.

Gout attacks usually last between 3-14 days.

Long Term - a healthy lifestyle is key to reducing gout flare ups, maintain a health weight and diet, avoid an excess of rich food and alcohol, keep well hydrated.

Medications such as Colchicine and Allopurinol can be taken daily to prevent uric acid build up. These need to be prescribed by your doctor. These are normally required indefinitely. Review current medication with your GP or pharmacist as diuretics, Aspirin and others can potentially trigger gout attacks.

When to see a podiatrist?

Repeated or prolonged gout attacks can cause damage to joints and as a result cause deformity to the feet and toes. This can lead to callus and corns forming that can become painful. A podiatrist can remove the callus or corn and offer advise on protecting the area.

In some cases urate crystals can penetrate the skin and cause a wound. This can cause bleeding and discharge from the area and potentially infection.

If this occurs you should seek urgent medical attention with your GP or practice nurse and they can arrange a treatment or a referral if required to services such as podiatry.

<https://cop.org.uk/foot-health/common-foot-problems/gout/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gout/>

http://www.ukgoutsociety.org/all_about_gout.htm

Podiatry Service

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