



FOOT & ANKLE SPECIALISTS, P.C.

Specializing in Medicine and Surgery of the Foot & Ankle

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What is Gout?

Gout, one of the oldest diseases recognized by man, appears to be hereditary; it is never contagious. Gout is characterized by the periodic and sudden occurrence of very painful, swollen joints, particularly of the big toe, but other joints of the feet, legs, hands and arms may be affected. The acute attack commonly comes on in the night, and a maximum intensity of pain in the joint may be reached in only a few hours. Episodes may come weeks, months or years apart. Affecting the joints and kidneys, gout is a metabolic disorder (a defect in body chemistry,) which causes abnormally large amounts of uric acid to be produced.

Why is excessive uric acid harmful?

Uric acid is manufactured by normal body processes. It is usually discharged from the body in the urine and intestinal tract and, in smaller quantities, through perspiration. When the uric acid level in the blood is abnormally high it is usually because the patient is not eliminating enough uric acid in the urine, or he is producing too much of it. Since uric acid is relatively insoluble in body fluids, crystals may precipitate out from the blood into and around joints and cartilage. These urate deposits are called tophi. Most commonly these deposits appear around the big toe and other joints of the feet, the hands and also on the external ear, whose framework is chiefly composed of cartilage. Urate deposits may also form in the kidney and urinary tract as kidney stones. Gout attacks are more prevalent with abnormally high uric acid levels, but even at fairly high levels there are some people who never develop symptoms of gout. Gout appears more often on people who have HTN, elevated TG's, diabetes, poor kidney function, heart disease and hardening of the arteries.

Does "high living" cause gout?

It is true that heavy consumption of alcoholic beverages or overeating may precipitate an attack. Some medicines may cause gout. Foods such as beef, chicken, pork, fish, bread and green vegetables can cause gout. Not drinking enough water can make gout worse.

What can you do to help yourself?

1. Enjoy a well balanced diet, relatively low in fat. Restrict your intake of beer, liver, kidney, sweetbreads, herring, sardines, anchovies, meat extracts, turkey and shellfish.
2. Enjoy plenty of liquids (at least 2 quarts of tap water or clear fluids daily) to help the kidneys excrete uric acid and decrease the possibility of developing kidney stones.
3. If an operation is anticipated, be sure to advise your surgeon of the fact that you have gout. Proper medication will help prevent an acute attack of gout, which often follows surgical procedures in susceptible individuals.

FOOD TO AVOID WITH GOUT

ALCOHOL	MEAT EXTRACTS
ANCHOVIES	MINCE MEATS
ASPARAGUS	MUSHROOM
BRAINS	MUSSELS
CONSOMME	SARDINES
GRAVY	SWEET BREAD
HEART	
HERRING	
KIDNEY	
LIVER	

FOODS TO LIMIT WITH GOUT

CAULIFLOWER	SPINACH
DRIED BEANS AND PEAS	WHOLE GRAIN CEREALS
FISH	YEAST
LENTILS	
MEAT	
OATMEAL	
POULTRY	
SEAFOOD	