

## FAST FACTS: Gout

Gout is a common form of inflammatory arthritis and is very painful. Gout happens when a person has too much uric acid in their blood which form sharp crystals in the joints. Uric acid is made when the body breakdowns purines. All foods contain some level of purines, but some foods have a higher concentration, such as sugary foods and drinks, alcohol, and meats. There is no cure for gout, but your family member can effectively treat and manage gout with medication and self-management strategies.

### ✓ Key Points

- Gout generally impacts one joint at a time, often the big toe joint.
- Your family member may also see gout in the knee, ankle, foot, hand, wrist, or elbow.
- Attacks are sudden and often cause extreme pain.
- Often redness and swelling occur around the painful joint.
- Gout is more common in men (3 to 1).
- Gout is more common in men over the age of 40.
- Women are more likely to get gout after menopause.
- Gout attacks generally last 3-10 days with the first 36 hours being the most painful.



### ✓ Risks

- Overweight
- Drink alcohol often.
- Family history of gout.
- Have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or heart disease.
- Take certain diuretics (water pill) for high blood pressure or some medications for rheumatoid arthritis or psoriasis.
- Have a history of gastric bypass surgery (weight lose surgery).

### ✓ Treatment

- Over the counter (OTC) anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen
- Ice the swollen area.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Dietary modifications including decreases in the following: sugary drinks and foods, alcoholic beverages (especially beer), meat (specially organ meats or game meats) and seafood (scallops, anchovies, & herring).

✓ **What Else You Should Do**

- Write down and share information about your family members pain prior to and following treatment to share with their primary healthcare team.
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) regularly to note important information useful to your family member's healthcare providers.
- Encourage your family member to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary.

**Resources**

1. WebMD (2022) *What is Gout? What Causes It?* <https://www.webmd.com/arthritis/arthritis-gout>. Accessed 1/5/2023.
2. CDC (2020). *Gout*. <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/gout.html#:~:text=quality%20of%20life%3F-What%20is%20gout%3F,no%20symptoms%2C%20known%20as%20remission>. Accessed 1/5/2023.

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