

Advice for Managing Gout



EasyRead Version



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What is gout?



Gout is a type of **arthritis**.

Arthritis is a disease that causes pain and swelling in the joints of your body.

In the UK about 1 person in 40 will suffer with gout.

It is more common in men than women.

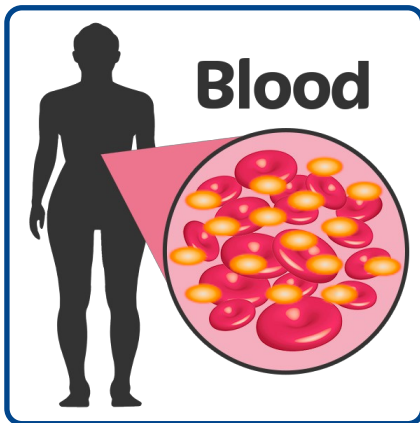
Gout mostly affects the joint of the big toe.

It can also affect other joints including the knees and ankles.

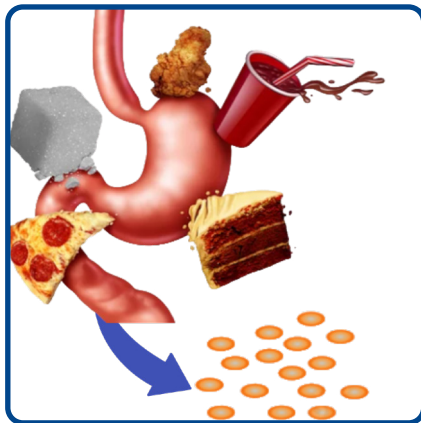
If you do not treat gout it can last for a long time.

It can also keep coming back.

What causes gout?



Gout is caused by having too much **uric acid** in your blood.

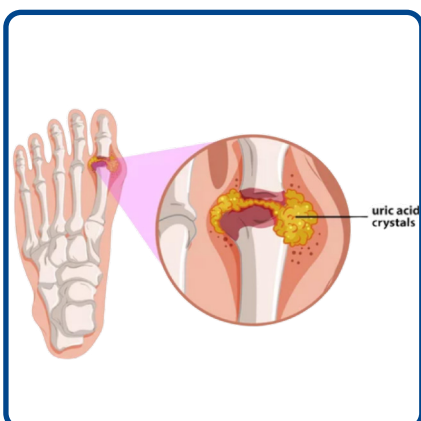


Uric acid is a waste product that is made as your body breaks down food and drink.



Most uric acid dissolves in your blood.

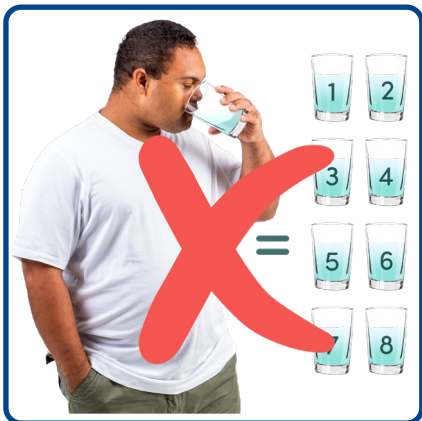
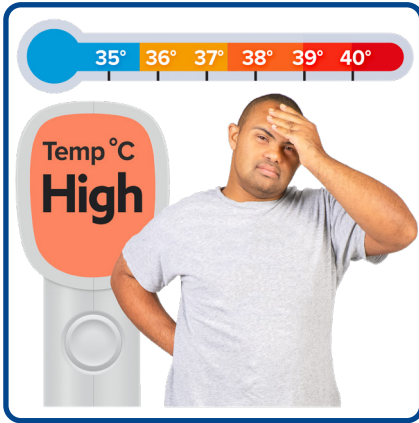
Your kidneys remove it from your blood and it leaves your body when you wee.



If you have too much uric acid in your blood it can cause painful crystals to form in your joints.

This is a gout attack.

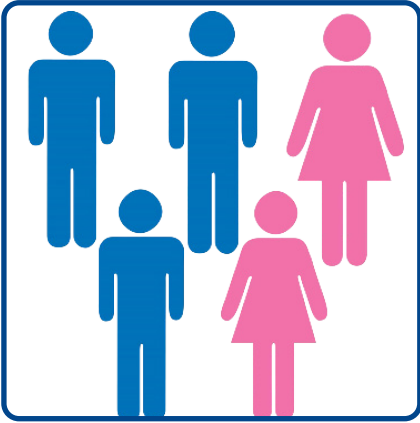
What can trigger a gout attack?



You might get a gout attack if you:

- have an illness that causes a high temperature or fever
- drink too much alcohol or eat a large, fatty meal
- get dehydrated. This is where you do not drink enough water and you feel thirsty
- injure a joint

Who gets gout?



Gout affects more men than women.



It sometimes runs in families.



You are more likely to get gout if you:

- are overweight



- drink too much alcohol

Who gets gout?



- have been through the menopause
- take certain medicines, including aspirin, for high blood pressure or to help you wee
- have a health condition such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, kidney problems, diabetes or osteoarthritis
- have had an operation or an injury

Treatment



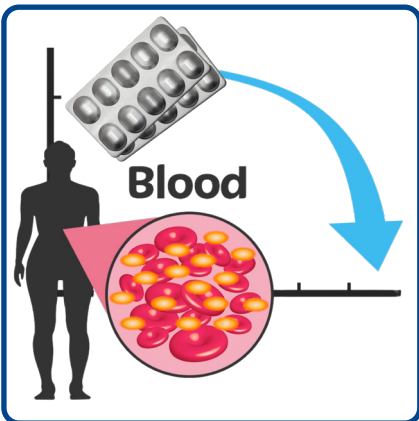
Gout is usually treated with medicines to help the pain and swelling.

This is usually something like **ibuprofen**.



If the pain and swelling do not improve your doctor might give you steroids. This could be as tablets or an injection.

Your doctor might prescribe a medicine called **colchicine**.



After a gout attack your doctor may give you tablets to help reduce the amount of uric acid in your blood.

You will need to take these for the rest of your life.



Your doctor will also talk to you about changes you can make to your diet and lifestyle.

How to help a gout attack



You should always see your doctor when you have a gout attack, but these things can help with the pain:

- take any medication your doctor has prescribed as soon as possible.
- rest and raise the part of your body that hurts
- use an ice pack to keep the joint cool
- drink lots of water, unless your doctor has told you not to



What if gout isn't treated?



If you stop taking your gout medicine, you increase the risk of more attacks in the future and this can cause:

- damage in your joints
- hard lumps to form under your skin. These can be very painful.
- kidney stones. These can be very painful.
- long-term arthritis



Reducing the risk of gout



Gout is a life long condition. You will need to take medicine for the rest of your life, but there are some things you can do to help reduce the risk of an attack. Do try to:

- lose weight
 - avoid foods with a high purine content. This is things like: liver, kidneys, seafood, alcohol
- You can find a list of gout friendly foods at www.ukgoutsociety.org
- have some alcohol free days each week

- drink lots of water

Reducing the risk of gout: Do



- exercise regularly when you are able



- stop smoking



- consider trying cherries or cherry supplements



- ask your doctor about vitamin C supplements.

Reducing the risk gout: Don't



Don't:

- have lots of sugary drinks and snacks



- eat lots of fatty foods.

Where to find help



You can find more information and support about gout at:

www.ukgoutsociety.org



You can also write to:

UK Gout Society Secretariat
PO Box 90
Hindhead
GU27 9FW



Or email info@ukgoutsociety.org



Approved by UK Gout Society



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