

Gout

What is gout?

- Gout is a health problem that affects the joints.
- If gout is not treated right away, it can lead to painful and deformed feet and joints, and kidney problems.
- If gout is treated early, you can ease pain and prevent future problems.

What causes gout?

- Gout is caused by having too much uric acid (a waste product made by your body) in your joints. It is most common in the joints of the big toe, ankle, and knee.
- If your joints have too much uric acid, the uric acid may form crystals that gather in the joints. This can cause a gout attack. When this happens, your joints will look red, hot and swollen and will be very painful, more pain than it looks like you should be in.
- Having too many gout attacks may cause these crystals to form large deposits called tophi. This can cause damage to the joints and deformity.

Who is at risk for gout?

Men have a higher risk for gout than women. Women can also be affected, mostly after menopause. Other factors that may raise your risk for gout are:

- Having certain health problems, such as obesity, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure.
- Drinking a lot of alcohol.
- Eating certain foods and taking certain medicines, such as diuretics (water pills), can trigger gout attacks.



Limit these foods and drinks if you have gout:

- Alcohol (mostly beer, but also red wine and spirits)
- Red meat and processed meats, such as sausage, bacon, and sliced deli meats.
- Organ meat, such as kidney, liver, and sweetbread.
- Most seafood, especially anchovy, herring and sardines.
- Beverages that have a lot of sugar, such as juice and soda.



Have more of these foods and drinks that help gout:

- Tart black cherry juice concentrate (2 tablespoons once each day **or** 10 to 12 cherries each day).
- Omega-3s from plant sources, such as flax seeds, walnuts, leafy greens, and supplements.
- Citrus fruits, like oranges.
- Coffee (1-2 cups a day) or Hibiscus tea
- Drink plenty of water



How is gout treated?

Gout can usually be treated with medicine and diet changes. In more serious cases, surgery may be needed.

- **Making lifestyle changes**, such as weight loss, getting more exercise, and quitting smoking.
- **Limiting certain foods** listed above, as well as foods and drinks with high fructose corn syrup, such as sodas and energy drinks.
- **Taking medicines** that lower the amount of uric acid in the blood. You can also take medicines that treat acute (serious) gout attacks.
- **Changing unneeded medicines** that can trigger gout attacks (such as thiazide diuretics “water pills”).

Talk with your CHN doctor if you have more questions!

Adapted from KRAMES