



## Gout

Gout is a type of arthritis that causes intense pain, swelling, and stiffness in a joint; classically, it affects the joint in the big toe. Gout attacks can come on quickly and keep returning over time, slowly harming tissues in the region of the inflammation.

Gout is the most common form of inflammatory arthritis in men, and although it is more likely to affect men, women become more susceptible to it after the menopause.



Podiatry & Foot Healthcare

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# What causes Gout?

Gout is characterised by sudden and severe pains, redness, and tenderness in the joints, most classically in the base of the big toe.

Gout is caused initially by an excess of uric acid in the blood (hyperuricemia). Uric acid is produced in the body during the breakdown of purines – chemical compounds that are found in high amounts in certain foods such as meat, poultry and seafood.

Normally, uric acid is dissolved in the blood and is excreted from the body in urine via the kidneys. If too much uric acid is produced, or not enough is excreted, it can build up and form needle-like crystals that trigger inflammation and pain in the joints and surrounding tissue.

The body views these crystals as foreign, and white cells infiltrate the joint, causing inflammation.

Chalky deposits of uric acid known as tophi can also form as lumps under the skin surrounding the joints.

## Treatment and Prevention of Gout

During symptom-free periods, these dietary guidelines may help protect against future gout attacks:

- Keep your fluid intake high. Stay well-hydrated, including plenty of water.
- Limit or avoid, alcohol especially beer.
- Limit your intake of meat, fish and poultry. A small amount may be tolerable, but pay close attention to what types and how much if it seems to cause problems for you.
- Maintain a desirable body weight.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), may help in the initial stages of a gout attack.

After an acute gout attack resolves, your doctor may prescribe drugs that can control the pain and symptoms of gout.

A gout attack may last from around three to ten days.



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The general information provided here does not constitute medical advice. You should consult with a suitably qualified foot health care clinician. Please contact your nearest *We Fix Feet* clinic to book your consultation.