Why You Need to Pay Attention to the Shoes You Wear With Gout

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Gout and Foot Pain

One of the most intense pains described in medical literature is the pain associated with gout. Since gout affects the feet, wearing shoes can be a serious problem. Let's take a look at gout and foot pain and uncover the reasons.

Why Do You Have Pain?

Besides foot pain, gout also causes impairment and disability. This happens because gout is caused by an increase in uric acid in the blood. Over time, these acid crystals will deposit around bone and cartilage. These areas become swollen, red and painful during a gout attack. After you experience an acute attack, you have about an 80% chance to get another flare-up within 2 years.

As the disease progresses, signs of chronic gout may occur. When gout becomes chronic, you are likely to experience more frequent and longer-lasting flare-ups, flare-ups affecting other joints besides the big toe (i.e., ankles and knees), tophi (nodules formed under the skin) and kidney problems.

Research

A 2011 study featured in "Arthritis Care and Research" evaluated the footwear characteristics and the main factors that influence footwear choices in gout sufferers. Fifty patients were recruited for this study. The results: the participants of the study had moderate to severe foot pain, as well as impairment and disability. Problems with the footwear included improper cushioning, not enough support, lack of stability and motion control. More than half of the shoes were more than one year old and thus overused. Patients considered comfort, fit, support and cost as the most important factors when buying new footwear.

Special Shoes

Some shoes are nowadays specifically designed for gout sufferers. They are deep footwear with a soft room toe area that helps relieve the pressure on the toes. Some may have a carbon graphite plate underneath the shoe that makes it more flexible while protecting and supporting the joints. Special socks have also been designed for individuals with gout, to keep their feet dry.

Custom orthotics can be provided by a chiropodist or podiatrist. They limit the motion of the damaged joints and therefore reduce the pain and inflammation. "Total contact foot orthotics" are shoes that limit the motion and conform tightly to the arch of the foot. Shoe modifications are also available to protect gouty joints.

Other Considerations

Finding comfortable shoes is indeed important to manage pain. But keep in mind the main problem: the gouty flare-ups. Therefore, you need to work with your doctor and get the best treatment for your condition. Less flare-ups and better control of your disease will reduce the pain, impairment and disabilities related to your feet. Take your meds as recommended, sleep well and exercise daily. Remember that a healthy diet can help control the production and elimination of uric acid (reduce intake of foods that are high in purines like animal products, fatty foods and sugary foods, and eliminate alcohol, especially beer).