Everything You Need to Know About Foot Gout

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What Is Gout in Foot?

Foot gout is a very common occurrence among gout sufferers. You probably had your very first flare in this area or have heard accounts from fellow sufferers who experienced the same. This is because gout commonly occurs in the big toe. Yes, it can affect other joints, but for the most part, gout targets the foot.

There is a similar condition to foot gout called hallux limitus. It's important not to confuse the two. They are both arthritis conditions, and the only difference is that hallux limitus is caused by the decomposition of cartilage around the big toe joint. With gout, however, the arthritis is caused by a buildup of uric acid in the blood which then gets deposited in the joint

What Causes Foot Gout?

We already know what causes gout. But you're probably wondering why the foot is the most impacted part of the body.

First is the fact that the feet have the lowest temperature in the body. It is furthest from the heart resulting in poor circulation in that area. Uric acid dilutes poorly in low-temperature levels making it easy to reproduce and create new crystals that build up.

Second, the feet are also an easy target for physical trauma. Your feet are the most used part of the body and therefore are at more risk of injury.

Symptoms of Foot Gout

A gout flare in the foot can be sudden and extremely painful. It feels like your big toe is on fire as it feels hot, swollen, and tender. The first 36 hours are the worst but after that, the pain lessens and lingers, but it doesn't entirely go away until after a week or two.

Once you experience a gout attack, call your doctor right away. They will provide you with medication to help lower uric acid levels and prevent it from worsening.

You may have difficulty walking or wearing shoes when you have foot gout. It's pretty common for gout sufferers to walk slower, have reduced stride length, and less pressure on the midfoot. This is because gout in the foot can be very painful and walking in such a manner can help lessen the pain.

Treatment of Foot Gout

If you suffer from foot gout, there are many different types of gout treatment approaches you can take to help lessen the flare.

Medication

Flares from foot gout can be treated using your regular gout medications. This includes NSAIDs, corticosteroids, and colchicine. These are short-term gout medications and should only be taken during a gout flare.

Then, certain medications need to be taken regularly to maintain low uric acid levels. This is called preventative medication and can include drugs such as allopurinol, febuxostat, probenecid, pegloticase, and lesinurad.

Light Exercise or Rest

This may sound counterintuitive but taking a walk during an attack might help you recover faster. For people who have had gout long enough, they've lived through the pain and have gotten used to it.

However, if this doesn't work for you – don't force it. Sit back, relax, and let your foot rest. Put it in an elevated position and place an ice pack on the affected area.

Buy a Comfortable Pair of Shoes

Find comfortable shoes that you can regularly wear preferably those that have cushioned insoles and a wide toe box. This helps support the feet and prevent contact with the toe which can feel sensitive to touch during the first few days after an attack.

Surgery

In certain situations, you may need to undergo an operation to remove the liquid inside. This is especially needed if the gout has already progressed into tophi.

Tophi is an advanced form of gout where the uric acid concentration is so high that the buildup results into lumps, which hampers normal movement and pose a threat to the surrounding joints and nerves.

Lifestyle Changes to Help Foot Gout

Treating foot gout in the long-term requires a combination of lifestyle changes and medications. After you have taken the right medication to treat your gout flare and manage uric acid levels, you should be taking steps to correct your lifestyle. There's only so much pills can do so it's important to accompany it with habits that support your condition.

Start with your weight. You probably have gout because you are overweight or obese. You want to lose the excess fat since that contributes to the strain you feel on your feet. Exercising regularly and cutting back on food intake can significantly help with your goal of losing weight.

Only go for real whole foods and avoid items that trigger your gout such as processed foods. I recommend the 80-10-10 diet where 80 percent of your daily calories consists of complex carbohydrates, 10 percent as protein and the final 10 percent as fat.

It's important that you learn how your body reacts to each food item as every person has a different physiology. What may trigger an attack on you may do nothing for the other person. Start by eliminating common culprits such as sugar, alcohol, seafood, and organ meats.

You may need to keep a diary to track your food and medication. That way whenever you have a gout attack in your foot, you can trace back what you ate and learn what caused the trigger.

In Conclusion

When you have gout, your flares will most likely occur in your foot. Taking a proactive role in your health is

important.

Follow the recommended diet and take your medicine regularly. Make it a point to stay active, so your blood circulation is normal, and your weight stays within the average BMI. Drink lots of water to dilute the uric in your body and stay away from things that trigger your gout.

Some of these steps are not easy, but it’s a lifestyle that you can slowly get used to with consistent practice.