Dispelling Common Myths About Gout

by YVONNE BANKS

Gout Facts and Myths

There was a time when a person with gout was thought of as an old, red-faced gentleman drinking and eating in excess. Though a person can aggravate the condition by eating or drinking, all in all, it is a hereditary condition, and it is something that cannot be prevented. It is a metabolic disorder that results in an accumulation of uric acid in the body. It causes red, swollen and painful joints to the sufferer.

Many myths still abound today about gout and the people who have the condition. Here are the gout facts!

1. If gout is just left alone, it will go away on its own.

   Myth. Many times the symptoms of a gout attack will resolve in a few days, but treatment is still needed. The gout itself has not gone away and the person is at risk for hyperuricemia. The long-term effects of having untreated gout could lead to joint damage and physical deformity.
2. Gout is a rare condition, so it isn't seen very often these days.

   Myth. Gout is the most common form of inflammatory arthritis in men over 40 years of age.
3. Gout isn't very painful so a person can live with the symptoms.

   Myth. The pain from gout has been compared to the pain a person would feel with a bone fracture.
4. My gout is under control for the most part, unless I am having a flare up.

   Myth. Gout is present for a lifetime and it is always a concern. Hyperuricemia can cause long-lasting damage to your joints without ongoing treatment. Treatment to control the level of uric acid in the blood needs to be taken at times between attacks as well as during one.
5. I can treat gout with home remedies and avoid alcohol and fatty foods.

   Myth. The treatment of gout involves managing hyperuricemia. It is important to lower uric acid levels so that attacks can be avoided or minimized. The development of chalky deposits and uric acid crystals around joints can result from gout attacks and lead to damage to the joints.

6. A crash diet is a good way to get rid of gout if you are overweight.

   Myth.
   It would be harmful to go on a crash diet with gout because this would only increase the levels of uric acid in the blood. Exercise and a healthy diet will allow you to lose the weight gradually without the risk of making your gout worse. It is best to talk with your doctor about the best course of action to lose excess weight.
7. Nothing will increase my risk of attack just so I avoid drinking too much water.

   Myth.

It is important to drink a sufficient amount of water each day to help keep uric acid levels down. If your body has high uric acid levels, your risk for an attack is much higher.