Are There Differences Between Gout and Pseudogout?

by YVONNE BANKS

Gout and Pseudogout

So, you may be wondering about gout and why there would be a condition called pseudogout. Any term with the phrase "*pseudo-*" insinuates that it means it is false or fake. It can be confusing for many people to know whether or not they have gout or just something that acts like it.

Gout and pseudogout both are known joint diseases that are caused by crystal formation. The differences start at that point for the two conditions. First, gout involves crystals that are made up of monosodium urate monohydrate, also known as uric acid crystals. Pseudogout has crystals made up of something entirely different. This substance is called calcium pyrophosphate. Pseudogout is also known as calcium pyrophosphate disposition disease. It's no wonder they call it pseudogout—it's easier to say!

Pseudogout, In a Nutshell

Pseudogout is much like gout in that it causes painful swelling in one or more joints of the sufferer. The most common area for pseudogout is the knee joint. It is not certain as to why these crystals form, but it is a known fact that the risk increases as a person gets older.

The disease does share many similarities to gout since the symptoms are alike in many ways. If you could see the crystals of each of the conditions under a microscope, you would see very distinct differences. Sometimes, a patient with gout may have pseudogout co-existing in the same affected joint. The crystals are what bring about the inflammation of the joints.

The risk factors for pseudogout are as follows:

- Hyperparathyroidism
- Degenerative arthritis
- True gout
- Amyloidosis

Treatment for Pseudogout

The treatment for pseudogout is very similar to that of gout. To bring the inflammation down, the following interventions are suggested:

- **Ice the area.** An ice pack helps to reduce inflammation by discouraging the buildup of blood in the affected area. Inflammation brings on more pain, so a cold pack will contribute to reducing it. Don't put ice directly on the area. If you are using an ice pack, wrap a cloth around it to keep the direct cold from your skin.

- **Resting the joint.** Avoiding the use of the joint will allow it to heal quickly. If you move it too much, you will only aggravate the area and cause more pain.
- **Over-the-counter medication.** Any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen are great remedies to use for bringing down swelling and relieving pain from pseudogout.
- **Have the fluid removed from the affected area.** It may be possible for your physician to remove the fluid that contains the crystals from the affected joint. This procedure will greatly help the pain and expedite the healing.
- **Cortisone injections. The shots are injected** into the affected joint to help decrease the inflammation in the area.
- **Colchicine.** Colcrys or colchicine is an oral medication for true gout. It has been found to be effective to help patients with pseudogout as well.
- **Stay hydrated.** Dehydration causes the blood to become concentrated, allowing crystals to form more easily. Drink plenty of water, especially if you perspire a lot during the day.