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BOO!



Risk Factors for Gout

By [Kristen Stewart](#) Reviewed by [Pat F. Bass, III, MD, MPH](#)



How to Assess Your Gout Risk

Gout is a funny-sounding name for an ailment, but

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Gout is a funny sounding name for an ailment, but anyone who has experienced gout pain knows this type of arthritis is no laughing matter. Caused by excess uric acid crystallizing in one or more joints, gout not only causes pain and inflammation, but that excruciating gout pain can be recurring.

Certain factors increase your gout risk, but you can take action to help keep gout symptoms at bay.

Age

While gout can strike people, especially men, in their twenties and thirties, it becomes more common beginning around age 45 and older.

"Using the salt shaker analogy, the older a patient gets the more likely it is for the shaker to get full and thus to overflow when additional 'salt' is added," says Theodore Fields, MD, spokesperson for GoutPitStop.com, director of the Rheumatology Faculty Practice Plan at the Hospital for Special Surgery, and professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City.

That results in a gout attack with painful gout symptoms. Gout risk can also increase with age because often the kidneys do not function as well, which can increase the uric acid level in the body. Finally with aging comes more medications for many people, and some of those drugs can raise gout risk.

Gender

While both men and women can get gout, it is more common in men. Gout risk also begins at an earlier age in men and lasts throughout their lives, primarily because beginning in adolescence men have higher uric acid levels than women, explains Dr. Fields. Estrogen tends to protect women from gout during the childbearing years, but after menopause a woman's gout risk increases.

Other Medical Conditions

A number of medical conditions can increase your gout risk.

"An obese person is four times as likely to develop gout as someone with a normal body weight," says N. Lawrence Edwards, MD, professor of medicine in

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Health & Wellness Events in September

We had the privilege of being a guest at the Molina Health Fair on September 8th, the Rio Grande Inc. Health Fair on September 17th, TriHealth Fair at Tricore and the Tempur-Sealy Health Fair on September 24th.



We truly enjoy educating our community about foot & ankle health.

the division of clinical immunology at the University of Florida in Gainesville, and chairman and CEO for the Gout & Uric Acid Education Society.

Diabetes and insulin resistance may also play a role in the development of gout as can having decreased kidney function. People with malignant tumors undergoing treatment can also have high levels of uric acid resulting in gout. Losing weight, if necessary, can help cut gout risk, as can seeing a doctor regularly to keep other health issues under control.

Excessive Alcohol Use

Drinking certain kinds of alcohol can also increase a bout of gout symptoms.

"Studies have shown that wine does not increase the risk of gout although beer can," says Herbert S.B. Baraf, MD, clinical professor of medicine at George Washington University and senior partner at Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates in the Washington, D.C. area.

"In a study comparing beer, spirits, and wine using a cut-off point of two drinks a day as 'high intake,' beer and to a lesser extent spirits were associated with the subsequent development of new gout. Wine did not appear to be a risk factor at this level."

To cut your gout risk, abstaining from alcohol is the safest bet, followed by drinking wine. Also, keep the number of drinks to a minimum.



Gout Triggers to Avoid

By [Kristen Stewart](#) Reviewed by [Pat F. Bass, III, MD, MPH](#)

Gout Triggers

Road trip to the AAPPM Conference in Denver.



A lot of work & fun happened!



The 3rd Annual NMPMA Legislative Meet-Up was held the evening of September 29th. Thank you John Anderson, Representative Debbie Armstrong, Senator Jerry Ortiz Y Pino, Senator Michael Padilla, Representative Jason Harper and Senator Bill O'Neill for taking the time out of your busy schedules to discuss healthcare concerns in our state that impact our patients. In attendance from our office was: Dr. Nathan Ivey, President of the NM Podiatric Association, Dr. Jonathan Williamson, Dr. Justin Ward, Jeanie Skousen, Office Manager, Lori Schleich, Practice Representative, Tammy Fite, Clinical Supervisor & Barb Foster, Billing Coordinator.



The old saying “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is particularly true when it comes to gout pain. A form of arthritis, gout may begin suddenly and result in severe pain, stiffness, and swelling of one or more joints.

While genetics can make a gout attack more or less likely (and no one can choose their genes), there are other gout triggers that you can and should control.

Eating High-Purine Foods

“High-purine foods can set off a gout attack, but they are not the underlying cause,” says Theodore Fields, MD, spokesperson for GoutPitStop.com, director of the Rheumatology Faculty Practice Plan at the Hospital for Special Surgery, and professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City.

“The wrong foods can be the ‘final straw’ that sets off a gout attack, but the patient needs to have been predisposed to the attack by having high blood uric acid with subsequent deposits of uric acid in the joints.” Examples of high-purine foods include red meat, shellfish, and beer.

Drinking Alcohol

Drinking alcohol of any type can trigger a gout attack because it decreases the kidneys’ ability to filter uric acid and can result in a build-up. High-purine alcoholic beverages, such as beer, can also lead to a higher uric acid level, another gout risk factor.

The more alcohol consumed, the bigger the chance of a gout attack, so people predisposed to gout should drink as little as possible. This is particularly true during the first six months after beginning a uric acid-lowering medication, which is already a risky time for increased gout attacks and gout pain.



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Being Overweight or Obese

Being obese quadruples your likelihood of gout. "Obesity, diabetes, and elevated cholesterol are conditions commonly seen together and when present in the same patient are referred to as metabolic syndrome. Patients with these conditions frequently also have elevated uric acid in their blood," says Herbert S.B. Baraf, MD, clinical professor of medicine at George Washington University and senior partner at Arthritis and Rheumatism Associates in the Washington, D.C. area.

Sometimes diuretics prescribed to treat high blood pressure can cause the high levels of uric acid, but sometimes high levels are present just because of issues related to these health concerns. Weight loss can often help reduce uric acid levels and therefore gout risk, but the amount of pounds shed must be significant.

Drinking Soda

High fructose corn syrup is a culprit in raising uric acid levels and increasing gout risk. Several 12-ounce servings of regular soda have been shown to increase uric acid in both men and women, according to Dr. Fields.

People at risk for gout should either switch to diet soda (which does not contain high fructose corn syrup) or limit regular soda to no more than one 12-ounce serving a day. It's also worth noting that high fructose corn syrup can be found in many fruit drinks, store-bought baked goods, ice cream, candy, processed fast food, breakfast cereals, and other items, so read labels carefully to spare yourself gout pain.

Becoming Dehydrated

Becoming dehydrated can also be a gout risk factor. Experts do not know the exact reason, but believe it may have something to do with the


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concentration of uric acid crystals in the joint fluid.

Gout is also associated with uric acid-containing kidney stones, the risk for which is significantly increased when you're dehydrated, says Fields. To prevent dehydration, drink six to eight 8-ounce servings of water a day (and more if you're sweating significantly from exercise or in hot weather).

The Weather

Hot weather can definitely be a gout risk factor as sweating can cause extra fluid loss from the body, which may result in dehydration. It's less clear if cold weather contributes to gout.

"In theory, uric acid is less soluble and therefore more likely to precipitate out in colder temperatures," says Fields. "This may be one of the reasons why the big toe is the most common spot for gout, since the temperature at the toe is lower than many areas of the body."

However, gout is not more frequently reported in cooler climates. Also, the hands would tend to have a lower temperature as well, but are less likely to experience gout pain in early attacks.

Poorly Fitting Shoes

Another gout trigger can be wearing the wrong shoes. Any kind of damage or trauma to an area may cause a gout pain flare in susceptible people. Shoes that rub the toe can contribute to an attack so it's best to make sure that the toe area of your shoes is wide enough to accommodate your feet without pinching or rubbing. This can be particularly useful if a gout attack does occur because it can be so painful that you might not be able to tolerate anything touching your toes.

Medical Treatments

Ironically some treatments designed to help



We are still collecting for [Locker #505 Student's Clothing Bank](#) which benefits all students (K-12) in Bernalillo County.

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Shoes we accept: All gently worn, paired men's, women's and kids shoes that are still reusable and re-wearable! That means no holes in the soles, nothing wet, mildewed or torn. This includes athletic shoes, dress shoes, casual shoes, timberland type work boots, sandals, heel and flats.

Shoes we do not accept: Ski boots, winter boots, roller skates, ice skates, roller blades, flip flops, crocs, bedroom slippers or single shoes.

We are still collecting!

people be healthier can contribute to the likelihood of gout pain. For instance, taking diuretics can decrease your kidneys' ability to remove uric acid and lead to hyperuricemia, a risk factor for developing gout.

Chemotherapy's breakdown and rapid turnover of cells can lead to increased production of uric acid. Surgery or a sudden severe illness that causes less blood flowing to the peripheral joints can be a risk factor for gout as can taking baby aspirin for the heart. Even uric acid-lowering medications themselves can increase the chance of gout in the short term.

Even if these treatments are risk factors, however, never stop any treatment or medication without consulting your doctor.

Genetics

While there's nothing we can do about our genetics, it is worth noting that this is a large risk factor for developing gout. In fact, one out of four people with gout pain have a family history of the condition. There are things you can do in terms of modifying your eating habits and general lifestyle, but gout is still an inherited disease and not your "fault."

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