

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE GOUT ARTHRITIS

1. What causes attacks of Gout Arthritis?

People with gout have an excessive amount of a chemical called Uric Acid in their blood and in their joints.

Often patients who have Gout have a strong family history.

Medications such as diuretics used for the treatment of High Blood Pressure or Niacin used in the treatment of Cholesterol raise the level of uric acid.

There is an epidemic of new patients having painful attacks of gout.

Many are younger post-menopausal women who are diabetic, have high cholesterol and diabetes.

2. How is the diagnosis of Gout established?

Many patients have sudden onset of pain, redness and swelling of a big toe or instep. The blood uric acid is measured and is greater than 6.0 mg/dl which is the normal level.

Musculoskeletal ultrasound is a safe imaging tool to visualize uric acid deposits around the gouty joint.

Some patients will have joint fluid removed from a painful joint. Examining this fluid under a microscope, we can see needle shaped crystals of uric acid.

Treatment is initiated with Colcrys or anti-inflammatories like Naprosyn, or Celebrex to alleviate the acute pain. Occasionally, low doses of prednisone are used.

3. How can gout be prevented?

Dietary changes are important. Eating less red meat, and sugary sucrose products. Drinking less or avoiding alcohol beverages. Maintaining the blood uric acid at 6.0 and below.

4. Uric acid that deposits in joints can cause permanent damage. If dietary changes does not help ; what else can be done?

Many people have 2 or more attacks of gout a year.

For them, the use of uric acid lowering medications like Allopurinol or Uloric is recommended to take chronically.

Just like diabetic and hypertensive patient takes a maintenance medication, the patient with recurrent gout can be well controlled on these oral medications.

5. Is there treatment if my attacks occur more often ? Krystexxa ,an intravenous

infusion is very effective and beneficial.

The **Good News** is that Gout arthritis can be diagnosed and safely treated.

Often dietary and life style changes along with medications to lower uric acid can bring about a remission and cure.