

Gout

Gout is a metabolic disease in which crystals of uric acid (monosodium urate) gets deposited in joints, tendons and surrounding soft tissues.

Causes & Symptoms

Causes:

The proteins that we consume in our diet get digested and undergo various steps of degradation in our body.

High levels of Uric acid can be produced due to:

- Intake of protein rich diet- high purine diet
- Abnormalities in chemical pathways that leads to excessive production of uric acid
- Certain drugs like Aspirin (Salicylates), Diuretics (Kidney drugs) interfere with the excretion of uric acid thereby raising its level in blood

Symptoms:

- Uric acid deposits as crystals in joints and tendons
- Monosodium urate crystals
- Irritation, inflammation of joints and tendon tissue
- Joints red/hot/swollen
- Hot/red and swollen
 - Big toe of foot
 - Ankles
 - Knee
 - Elbows
 - Joints of hand/feet

Risk Factors, Diagnosis & Investigations

Risk Factors:

- A protein rich diet
- A high alcohol intake
- Certain races, like Maoris and Polynesian
- Obesity
- Conditions that cause high cell turnover, such as polycythaemia (increased red cells), lymphomas and various other cancers can increase blood uric acid levels. Drugs like Diuretics (drugs increasing urine flow) or low dose salicylates, Kidney diseases.

Diagnosis:

- History Sudden onset of severe pain, swelling and redness of joint in great toe of the foot
- Swelling of joints of foot, ankles and hands
- History of alcohol or red meat intake a day prior to painful attack
- History of similar episodes in the past

Investigations - Blood tests • Rise in uric acid Fluid examination from swelling • Uric acid crystals X-rays • Long standing cases joint destruction

Treatment & Prevention

Acute attack:

- NSAID'S : Pain killers in high dose initially to settle pain and swelling
- Colchicine : can be given in acute attack
- Newer drugs to reduce level of uric acid in blood
- Rest to affected joint during acute phase

Prevention:

- Avoid Protein rich diet – High Purine foods
- Avoid Dehydration: especially in hot weathers
- Avoid unaccustomed strenuous exercise

Once you are diagnosed with Gout, you're a patient of gout for your life.

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Your doctors contact information is available in the box below.

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