



Gout

What is gout? Gout is a form of arthritis caused by a build up of uric acid crystals in the joints. A high level of uric acid in the body is called **hyperuricaemia**. Typical symptoms include inflammation, swelling and stiffness. It commonly affects the big toe but other joints such as the foot, ankle, knee, wrist or elbow can also be affected.

Who is affected? Gout affects **more men than women** -. It takes many years of raised uric acid before gout occurs, and therefore middle aged men and post menopausal women are more likely to be affected by gout.

What causes gout? Raised uric acid occurs either when the body produces too much uric acid or when the kidneys are not able to excrete uric acid normally. Stores of uric acid develop in tissues around the joints or under the skin causing acute clinical gout and thus **severe inflammation**.

Some of the conditions below may contribute to an episode of gout.

- Diuretics
- Surgical procedures
- Serious illness
- Heart attack
- Trauma
- Change to a hot climate
- Alcohol bingeing and even abstinence in heavy beer drinkers causes attacks of gout.

What Foods trigger an attack of gout?

Foods that contain Purines can trigger an attack of gout, as purine raises uric acid levels in the body.

Treatment involves the following?

Drug therapy, losing weight and avoiding foods that contain purine

A registered dietitian can further advise on dietary management.

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