

# Gout in People with Chronic Kidney Disease

## Patient TIPS for Living with Kidney Disease

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### What is gout?

Gout is a painful swelling of the joints usually caused by too much uric acid in your blood. Joints of the lower body are most commonly affected, especially the big toe. However, other joints can also be affected.

### What causes gout?

Uric acid is naturally found in everyone and is removed by the kidneys. This acid builds up in the blood when the kidneys aren't working well. Certain medications such as water pills can also increase uric acid levels.

Although gout can appear with no warning, it can be brought on by excessive alcohol intake, certain foods, illness or surgery.

### How is gout treated?

Losing weight and avoiding alcohol and certain foods can help prevent attacks. For painful joints, rest and ice packs may help. Medications can also be used. Three medications commonly used are colchicine, prednisone, and allopurinol.

Colchicine is often used at the first sign of a gout attack as it is most effective then. The doctor may need to adjust the dose based on kidney function and side effects (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain) →

are common), so let your doctor know if you experience these side effects. Colchicine should only be used for the acute attack. It should not be taken long-term unless recommended by your doctor.

Prednisone is another medication that may be prescribed for gout.

**Prednisone should be taken with food to reduce stomach upset.** It should only be used for the acute attack. It should not be taken long-term unless recommended by your doctor.

Allopurinol is used to prevent gout attacks and is used in people who experience gout frequently. It reduces the amount of uric acid in the blood and must be taken everyday in order to be effective. It does not reduce the pain and swelling of an acute gout attack. This is why the doctor may prescribe allopurinol together with colchicine or prednisone. **Allopurinol should be taken everyday and colchicine or prednisone for the acute attack only.** The most common side effect of allopurinol is a skin rash. If you experience a skin rash, stop the allopurinol and let your doctor know immediately. Febuxostat is an alternative for patients who can not tolerate allopurinol. There are some significant interactions with febuxostat or allopurinol when used with other medications (eg. azathioprine). Please check with your doctor or pharmacist.

The aim of treatment at the start of a gout attack is to reduce the swelling and pain in the joints. For patients with normal kidney function, drugs called NSAIDs are commonly used. Aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen and diclofenac are all examples of NSAIDs. However, these drugs are not generally given to people with reduced kidney function since they can cause fluid retention, increase blood pressure and further reduce kidney function. It is important to avoid these medications and other similar drugs such as Celebrex®.

At this time, there are no natural herbal remedies that can be safely used for gout.

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