

# GOUT

This fact sheet was developed from excerpts from the Gout brochure of the Arthritis Foundation.  
Illustration is from Arthritis 101 book of the Arthritis Foundation.

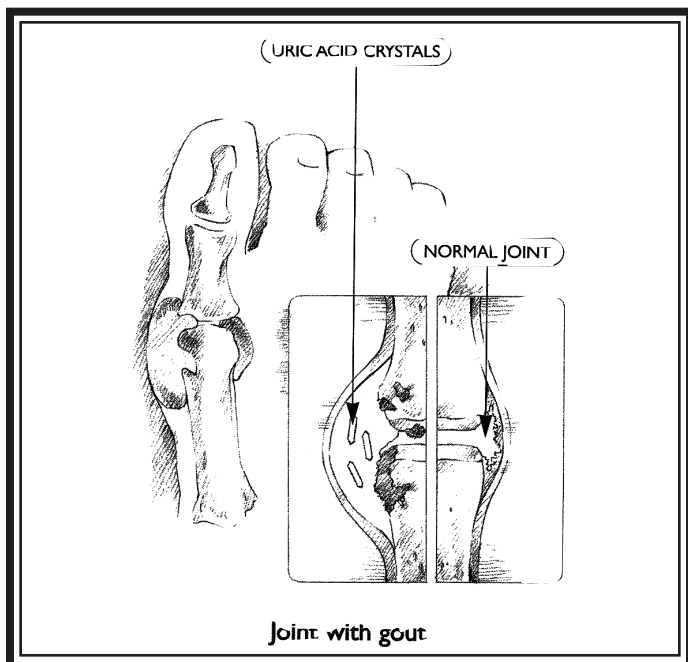
## WHAT IS GOUT?

Gout is a disease that causes sudden, severe periods of pain, tenderness, redness, warmth and swelling (inflammation) in some joints. It usually affects one joint at a time—often the large joint of the big toe. It also can affect other joints, such as the knee, ankle, foot, hand, wrist and elbow. It rarely affects shoulders, hips, and spine. If you have gout in one joint, it does not mean you will get it in another.

## CAUSES

Most people who have gout have too much uric acid in their blood. The kidneys not being able to get rid of the acid fast enough may cause this. Another cause may be the body makes too much. This is a condition called Hyperuricemia.

Family history, diet, weight, and alcohol use can also play a role in causing gout.



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This publication was supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number 99038 from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



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## OTHER FACTORS

- Large deposits of uric acid crystals in the joint(s) and other tissues can occur after several years. It must be treated so joints are not damaged.
- Uric acid can form stones in the kidneys, bladder or in the tubes that connect the kidneys and bladder.

## DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis is based on a physical exam and a history of symptoms. Fluid from the affected joint is the best way to diagnose gout.

## TREATMENT

Treatment is made up of taking medicine(s) and watching what you eat. Goals of the treatment plan are to relieve pain, swelling, future attacks and joint damage. While there is no cure for gout, it can be controlled very well with medication and a proper diet. Allopurinol is a medicine that can be used to reduce the uric acid level in the blood. If the correct level is maintained, future gout attacks are prevented. While Allopurinol is very helpful in preventing future gout attacks, it is not effective in stopping an attack currently in progress.

**For more information contact:**  
**Missouri Arthritis & Osteoporosis**  
**Program: 1-800-316-0935 or**  
**Arthritis Foundation: 1-800-283-7800**