American Kidney Fund®
FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS

Goutful.

Learn the truth about gout and kidney disease.

KIDNEYFUND.ORG/GOUT

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It’s just a pain in your toe . . .

Goutful.

Gout can cause extremely severe pain to develop in all the joints in your body.

WHAT IS GOUT?

Gout is a type of arthritis. Arthritis is a common condition that causes swelling and pain in your joints. Gout does not have a cure and will usually last your whole life.

Gout comes in sudden, and sometimes severe attacks, also called flares, or flare-ups. During a gout attack you may have pain, swelling and/or redness in your joints. Gout is extremely painful and sometimes hard to control.

Kidney disease can lead to gout, and gout may lead to kidney disease. If you have either condition, talk to your doctor about preventing the other.

SYMPTOMS

Gout attacks often happen in the big toe, but can affect any of your body's joints like your elbows, knees, hands or ankles.

PAIN
Tiny, sharp crystals build up under the skin around your joint, which causes pain that can be severe.

SWELLING
Your joint may swell, meaning it will increase in size or look puffy. A gout attack in your joint may look like swelling from an injury.

REDNESS
Your joint may appear red in color.

WARMTH
Your joint may feel hot, as if it is giving off heat. It may be warm to the touch.

STIFFNESS
In more severe cases of gout, your joint may feel stiff.

CAUSES

Gout is caused by having too much uric acid in your blood. Uric acid is made when your body breaks down chemicals called purines. Purines are found naturally in your body, and can also be found in certain foods.

When you have gout, your body either makes too much uric acid, or cannot get rid of it well enough. When uric acid builds up in the fluid around your joints, tiny crystals called urate crystals can form. Urate crystals cause gout symptoms, including pain and swelling.

COMPLICATIONS

Having gout, and especially chronic gout, can lead to serious health problems over time if left uncontrolled.

Tophi



Tophi are clumps of urate crystals that can form on most joints and cartilage including fingers, hands, feet and ankles. They may not cause pain, but can damage your joints, bone and cartilage.

Kidney stones



You are at risk for getting kidney stones when you have gout, since urate crystals can build up in your urinary tract and form stones.

Kidney disease and kidney failure



Kidney stones made from urate crystals can build up in your kidneys, and can cause damage and scars. This is thought to lead to kidney disease over time, especially if gout is left untreated.

Joint damage



Chronic swelling and tophi caused by gout can lead to permanent joint damage and deformity. In the worst cases, you may need surgery to fix or replace damaged joints.

Psychological and emotional problems



Gout can cause chronic and sometimes constant pain, limiting the ability to walk, work and live a normal life.



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Chronic gout is considered having two or more gout attacks per year, and there are medicines to prevent attacks.

MYTH OR FACT?

Take a quick online quiz to learn more about the myths and facts about gout.

KidneyFund.org/gout

ACUTE VS. CHRONIC GOUT

ACUTE GOUT

- Usually only 1-3 joints are affected.
- You will only feel symptoms during attacks.
- Attacks may last from a few days to a week.
- After attacks, you will not feel symptoms.
- You may start by having acute gout but worsen to chronic gout over time if attacks happen more often.

CHRONIC GOUT

- 2 or more gout attacks per year.
- Often more than one joint is affected.
- Some people with severe chronic gout have only short breaks in between attacks and feel symptoms of gout most of the time.
- Chronic gout can lead to permanent joint stiffness, damage and deformity.

GOUT & KIDNEY DISEASE

What's the connection?

1 out of 10 people with chronic kidney disease has gout, and an even higher percentage of people with gout has kidney disease.

Kidney disease can lead to gout

When you have kidney disease, your kidneys cannot filter out uric acid as well as they should. Too much uric acid building up in the body may cause gout.

Most people with early stage kidney disease do not know they have it. Gout can be a warning sign of kidney disease. Ask your doctor if you should be tested for kidney disease if you have gout.

Gout may lead to kidney disease

This connection is less established, but many doctors who specialize in the disease believe a connection exists.

When you have gout, urate crystals form and may cause damage to the kidneys as they are filtered through. This damage is thought to lead to kidney disease and kidney failure over time, especially if gout is left untreated.

NSAIDs, some of the most common pain relieving medicines for gout, can also lead to kidney disease over time. Talk to your doctor about how to manage your use of NSAIDs.

LIVING WITH GOUT AND KIDNEY DISEASE

Some of the most common medicines for acute and chronic gout should be adjusted or avoided when you have kidney disease.

Additionally, some people with kidney disease take medicines that may increase their risk of gout. Talk to your doctor about a treatment plan that works best for you.

Keep your conditions under control and improve your general health when you have gout and kidney disease.

- Keep a healthy blood pressure.
- Keep a healthy blood sugar level.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
- Follow a diet low in purines, alcohol and foods with high fructose corn syrup and high sugar content.
- Eat a healthy diet rich with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. If you have diet restrictions because of kidney disease, talk to your doctor or dietitian about managing your diet with gout and kidney disease.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week to stay physically fit.

Learn more about gout and kidney disease

Visit **KidneyFund.org/gout** for more gout resources and to find a gout specialist in your area.

TREATMENTS FOR GOUT

Medicines for gout prevention and complications
Your doctor can prescribe medicines that can help keep a healthy level of uric acid in your body, which can prevent future gout attacks and the complications from gout.

Typically gout is treated by a rheumatologist, but if you have kidney disease also talk to your nephrologist about which medicines are safe for you.

Medicines for gout attacks
The main goal of treatment during a gout attack is to decrease pain and swelling. Certain medicines to treat pain and swelling are over-the-counter, while others may need to be prescribed.

> I don't need to take medicine to prevent gout if I just have a few attacks a year . . .



Goutful.
There are medicines that can prevent future gout attacks, and the damage to your joints and bones that gout can cause.