

# Kidney disease and gout:

## Get the most from your virtual doctor visits

Most doctors now offer health visits by video or phone instead of in person at their office. This is called a telehealth visit or a virtual doctor's visit. Your doctor will let you know if you can have a virtual visit or if you need to come to the office.

A virtual visit is an easy way to talk with your doctor about living with gout and kidney disease. Virtual visits also let you:

- Have your doctor's visit in the comfort of your home
- Use the time that you would have spent traveling to the office on something you enjoy
- Save money that you may have spent on parking
- Avoid possible exposure to germs from others in the office

**Here is how to get the most out of your virtual visits:**

### 1

## Prepare for your virtual visit

### Get your device ready

**Use a smartphone, tablet or computer with a webcam for your visit.**

- Choose your device that has the best camera
- Test the camera and audio
- Make sure you have a good internet connection

**Follow the instructions from your doctor's office** to download and test the telehealth app on your device ahead of time, if needed

### Right before your visit starts:

- Fully charge your device or plug it in so you do not lose connection
- Close other apps or programs

### Set up the room for your visit

**Find a quiet, private place with little background noise** – you may need to share personal details with the doctor that you would not want others to hear.

- Make sure the room has plenty of light
- Sit eye-level with the camera – this helps you make eye contact with your doctor
- Keep your device steady during your visit, such as by propping it up on a table

### Gather what you may need

#### **Wear loose, comfortable clothing**

– it will be easy to move if you need to show your doctor a specific part of your skin or body.

#### **Gather these items, if you have them:**

- All your medicines, or a list of them, to review with your doctor
- Thermometer
- Flashlight – your doctor may ask you to shine a light to see a part of your body close up
- Blood pressure monitor
- Blood glucose meter, if you have diabetes

#### **Write down a list of your questions and any symptoms before the visit starts.** Here are some to start:

- What can I do to lower my gout pain and swelling?
- What should I do if my pain and swelling continue or get worse?

## 2

## Ask questions and get answers

### Describe your symptoms to help your doctor give you the right care.

Start by telling the doctor about your gout attacks (also called flares or flare-ups).

- Number of gout attacks I have had since my last visit: \_\_\_\_\_
- A gout attack usually lasts: \_\_\_\_\_ days

#### I have gout in my:

- ☐ Hand
- ☐ Ankle
- ☐ Foot or toes
- ☐ Knee
- ☐ Elbow
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### My symptoms include:

- ☐ Pain
- ☐ Swelling
- ☐ Redness
- ☐ Feeling warm to the touch
- ☐ Stiffness
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### When I have symptoms:

- ☐ I can still carry out my daily activities
- ☐ I have trouble carrying out daily activities
- ☐ I cannot carry out my daily activities

Ask your most important questions first in case you run out of time.

Check that you understand what your doctor said by repeating the information back to them in your own words. **You can say:**

"I want to make sure I understand... (repeat the information). Did I get that right?"

## Ways to manage gout symptoms between virtual visits

### The main goal is to lower your pain and swelling:

- Avoid foods high in purines, such as anchovies, asparagus, animal organs (such as liver) and mushrooms
- Avoid alcohol
- Drink enough water, about 8, 8oz. glasses a day
- Take medicines prescribed or recommended by your doctor, such as medicines to lower uric acid, NSAIDs and steroids—ask your doctor if these medicines are safe for your kidneys
- Keep pressure off your painful joint
- Elevate the joint, such as by propping your foot up on a chair
- Use an icepack to keep your joint cool

**If your pain during a gout attack does not get better at all within 48 hours, call your doctor to ask for other treatments you can try.**

Learn more about gout and kidney disease at [kidneyfund.org/gout](https://www.kidneyfund.org/gout)

# Goutful.

Learn the truth about gout and kidney disease.