Arthritis - Gout

Gout is caused by uric acid crystals forming in the joint. **The big toe, foot, ankle, and knee are the joints most often affected.** Often uric acid levels in the blood are also elevated. Symptoms develop rapidly, usually over hours. A joint fluid exam may be needed to prove the diagnosis. Acute gout episodes may follow a minor injury, surgery, illness or medication change. Gout occurs more often in men. It tends to be an inherited (passed down from a family member) condition. Your chance of having gout is increased if you take certain medications. These include water pills (*diuretics*), aspirin, niacin, and cyclosporine. Kidney disease and alcohol consumption may also increase your chances of getting gout. Months or years can pass between gout attacks.

Treatment includes ice, rest and raising the affected limb until the swelling and pain are better. **Anti-inflammatory medicine usually brings about dramatic relief of pain, redness and swelling within 2-3 days.** Other medications can also be effective. Increase your fluid intake. **Do not** drink alcohol or eat liver, sweetbreads, or sardines. Long-term gout management may require medicine to lower blood uric acid levels, or changing or stopping diuretics. Please see your caregiver if your condition is not better after 1-2 days of treatment.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have more serious symptoms such as a fever, skin rash, diarrhea, vomiting, or other joint pains.

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