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GOUT

Gout is a form of arthritis that occurs most typically within the big toe joint, however attacks can occur in other leg and arm joints.

SYMPTOMS

The disease produces pain, swelling, redness and warmth in the big toe joint. There is usually a sudden onset of pain and symptoms. Many patients relate having discomfort that wakes them from a restful sleep. Also, there is usually no recall of injury to the toe.

CAUSES

Most often it occurs in men and in post-menopausal women. It occurs as a result of having too much uric acid in the body and in the joint fluid. Uric acid is sensitive to temperature changes and at cooler temperatures it turns into crystals. Because your big toe is farthest from your heart, it is also the coolest part of the body and is more susceptible to developing gout. The accumulation occurs from the body's inability to process certain protein substances called purines (PURE-EENS) found naturally in our diet. Organ meats, beer and salt should be avoided. Also, gout may be precipitated by an operation, emotional stress and diuretic intake.

TREATMENT

Oral anti-inflammatory drugs, immobilization, elevation and steroid injections are all first line treatments for acute attacks. Long term control of uric acid levels are through medication such as Allopurinol, Zyloprim, Colchicine or Uloric.



For More Information:

<http://www.foothealthfacts.org/footankleinfo/gout.htm>

http://www.rheumatology.org/practice/clinical/patients/diseases_and_conditions/gout.asp