



14 Ways to Deal With Painful Gout Attacks

by SPIRO KOULOURIS

Tips on How to Cope With a Gout Attack

A gout attack is one of the most painful things you can experience. I should know. I've had gout for almost 15 years now, and in that time I have learned plenty of hacks when it comes to dealing, treating, and preventing gout attacks.

Home Remedies for Gout Pain

If you're just at home, you can easily whip up a few home remedies using some ingredients from your pantry.

- **Drink apple cider vinegar or do a foot soak.** Apple cider vinegar (ACV) helps alkalize the body and relieve acute gout pain. Dilute 1 to 2 tablespoons of raw, unfiltered organic ACV in 8 ounces of water and drink it 2 to 3 times a day. You can also soak your feet in a bucket that has 1 cup of apple cider vinegar diluted in 4 cups of hot water, for 30 minutes. Another thing you can do is wrap the affected area for 15 minutes with a clean cloth that's been soaked with ACV.
- **Drink lemon juice or take it with baking soda.** Lemon is another alkalizing remedy that helps reduce uric acid levels. Use half a lemon and mix it with 8 ounces of water and drink three times a day. You can also add half a teaspoon of baking soda to enhance its effect.
- **Consume baking soda.** Dilute half a teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water and drink it three times a day. Only do this if you don't have high blood pressure as baking soda is very high in sodium.
- **Eat cherries.** Cherries are known to be very good at treating gout as it contains powerful antioxidants that lower uric acid levels. Try to consume 2 to 3 servings of cherries a day. You want to avoid processed cherries like cherry concentrate as those contain hidden sugars which can be very bad for your gout.
- **Drink ginger or turmeric tea, add it to your recipes, eat it raw or apply it topically.** Ginger and turmeric contain very powerful anti-inflammatories that can provide relief to gout pain. Simply make tea with ginger root or turmeric use it when you're cooking. You can also apply it topically on the affected area and let it sit for 30 minutes.
- **Soak in Epsom salt.** Epsom salt is a highly effective topical gout treatment thanks to its alkalizing properties. Soak the affected joint in a bath that has 2 cups of Epsom salt for 30 minutes.

Medicines for Gout

There are plenty of medications for gout available in the market, but they are divided into two types: medicine that prevents gout by keeping uric acid levels normal (long-term) and medicine that relieves pain during a gout attack (short-term).

Your doctor will prescribe you with medicine that best fits your current health status and preference. They'll most likely provide you with a combination of both allowing you to maintain normal uric acid levels every day and be prepared in case a gout attack occurs.

Below is a list of medications for gout.

Short-Term Medications:

- **Colchicine** - This medicine blocks inflammation and reduces swelling caused by the buildup of uric acid crystals. It's best taken in low doses as higher doses can lead to nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** - This anti-inflammatory medication can come in pill, capsule, or topical gel form. NSAIDs reduce gout pain by blocking the enzymes and proteins involved in the inflammation. Side effects of NSAIDs include nausea, hives, rashes, and heartburn.
- **Corticosteroids** - Corticosteroids provide immediate relief by reducing the pain and swelling from inflammation. It can be taken in pill form or injected into the muscle of the affected joint. People with diabetes should be careful when taking corticosteroids as they are known to affect blood sugar levels.

Long-Term Medications:

- **Allopurinol** – Allopurinol inhibits the enzyme responsible for metabolizing purines which contribute to high blood levels of uric acid. Some patients may not experience the benefits of allopurinol for up to six months. During this time, it's normal to experience gout flare-ups. The doctor may prescribe allopurinol along with colchicine to help you manage the pain until the medicine eventually starts to take effect.
- **Febuxostat** – Febuxostat also decreases uric acid levels in the blood. If you suffer from kidney disease, this is a good option since the liver metabolizes it.
- **Probenecid** – Recommended if you have poor functioning kidneys that can't excrete uric acid properly. Probenecid helps to increase excretion as well as reduce uric acid levels.
- **Lesinurad** - Lesinurad also helps lower uric acid levels and is often accompanied by allopurinol especially if you're having a hard time reducing uric acid with just allopurinol alone.
- **Pegloticase** - This is a last resort medication taken only by the three percent of gout sufferers who cannot tolerate other treatment options. It comes as a solution that's injected intravenously every two weeks by a doctor or nurse in a clinic. Similar to allopurinol, the effect of pegloticase may not be felt during the first three months so other medications such as colchicine or NSAIDs may be prescribed until the treatment starts to take effect.

What If I Don't Have Any of These?

If you have a gout attack, but you don't have any of these remedies ready nearby, don't fret just yet. There are still a few things you can do to manage the pain.

First, make sure the joint is rested until the pain subsides. Avoid touching it as even a light touch can cause excruciating pain. However, if you need to walk, use a cane to minimize the pressure on the affected joint. Then, to lessen the inflammation, apply cold compress on the affected joint.

Drinking lots of water as this helps to flush the excess uric acid. Drinking water also helps prevent future gout attacks. A study found that those who drink more than eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day experience a 48% reduction in gout attacks.

You'll also want to keep an eye out on foods that trigger gout. The last thing you want is for it to come back right after you just had an attack.

Once you're already able to visit a doctor, follow their prescribed medication. They may run some blood tests and suggest a therapy to lower your uric acid levels. If the pain persists after 48 hours, your doctor may recommend a different treatment.

Call the Doctor

When experiencing a gout attack, it is important to call a physician and make an appointment for immediate gout treatment.

At this appointment, the doctor may recommend a low-purine diet for the patient to prevent attacks like this in the future. Purines are the cause of the uric acid accruing in the joints and are found in many different foods.

Ask your doctor if there are any other measures you can take to prevent future attacks.

The Bottom Line...

A gout attack can happen to anyone who experiences arthritis and a high-purine diet. If you take steps to cut down on the amount of purines in your body and live a healthy lifestyle, the chance of getting gout decreases slightly.

However, if you are afflicted with gout, follow the tips above to help treat it. If left untreated, gout can cause severe pain and even destroy muscle and bone tissue in and around the affected joint, so try to consult a doctor as soon as you begin to experience a gout attack.