

# Health Awareness

## Foot, Knee Or Ankle Pain? Don't Rule Out Gout

(NAPSA)—Eight million Americans have gout. It's the most common form of inflammatory arthritis in men over the age of 40. However, its symptoms can be similar to those of a stubbed toe or ankle sprain, which is why so many people often misinterpret the pain associated with a gout attack for something else. Jim Belushi is one of them.

When the actor and performer's big toe became too swollen and painful to touch, he credited it to a jogging injury. But after a visit to his doctor, he found out that he actually had gout.

"When gout attacks for the first time, many sufferers mistake the pain for an impact-induced injury or a sprain," said Herbert S. B. Baraf, M.D., clinical professor of medicine at The George Washington University. "It is important to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of gout and to seek proper treatment."

Now, knowing the importance of diagnosis and taking an active part in treatment management, Belushi is taking part in the "Check Out Your Gout" campaign to increase awareness surrounding gout and a more advanced form of the condition known as refractory chronic gout, or RCG.

Symptoms of gout manifest in painful flares that can include sudden inflammation, redness and swelling in the joints. Gout flares are common in the big toe but can happen in any joint of the body.

"When I first developed gout, I didn't want to do anything about it. I thought I could tough it out, but when the pain became too unbearable for me to perform on stage, I saw a rheumatologist and got my gout under control," said Belushi.



**CHECK  
OUT YOUR  
GOUT.**



**Actor Jim Belushi did not suspect gout when he first experienced toe pain.**

Gout is caused by a high level of uric acid in the blood. When this level becomes too high for the body to process, uric acid builds up and can crystallize in and around joints, resulting in a gout attack. In advanced cases, collections of uric acid crystals may deform joints and even cause visible lumps to form on hands, feet and joints. "It is important to seek the help of a rheumatologist to manage the underlying cause of gout: a high level of uric acid. Over time, gout attacks may become more frequent and severe, leading to joint destruction, deformity and other health issues," said Dr. Baraf.

Learn more about gout and RCG and assess your symptoms at [www.CheckOutYourGout.com](http://www.CheckOutYourGout.com).