

Signs & Symptoms Of Gout

(NAPSA)—Gout is a type of arthritis that affects an estimated 3 to 5 million Americans and is characterized by periods of intense joint pain or “flares,” occurring most often in the big toe. Gout can cause damage to joints, tendons and other tissues over time. It is more common in men over age 40 and in postmenopausal women. The good news is that gout pain is highly treatable and there are ways to reduce the risk of gout recurrence.

What Are The Symptoms Of Gout?

You may be experiencing joint pain from time to time but are uncertain if you have gout. The only way to be sure is to see your doctor, who can provide a diagnosis and design an appropriate treatment plan.

Symptoms of gout are almost always acute, occurring suddenly—often at night—and without warning and may include the following:

- Intense joint pain. While gout often initially affects the large joint of the big toe, it can occur in your feet, ankles, knees, hands and wrists.
- Inflammation and redness. The affected joint or joints become hot, swollen, red and extremely tender.
- Fever. Increased body temperature has been reported among some gout sufferers during an attack.

The pain of gout flares can often be excruciating and debilitating, often affecting a patient’s ability to work and participate in social activities.

Causes And Risk Factors

Gout is caused by the buildup of uric acid in the blood, a condition known as hyperuricemia. Sustained hyperuricemia can lead to the body storing excess uric acid in the form of crystals, which accumulate in the joints, causing large deposits known as tophi.

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Risk factors for developing gout include genetic predisposition, alcohol consumption and a diet rich in high-purine foods. Purines are natural substances found in many foods, but certain foods such as meat and shellfish are high in purine. Other gout risk factors include obesity, hypertension and diabetes.

Gout Treatments

Doctors may prescribe prescription drugs to treat gout. One of these drugs, colchicine, has been used for many years but, until recently, had never been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Now, the FDA has approved COLCRYS® as the only single-ingredient colchicine product for the prevention and treatment of gout flares. COLCRYS, when dosed as indicated, has been shown to be effective at relieving acute gout flares within a 24-hour period with significantly fewer side effects than unapproved colchicine.

Other treatments, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or corticosteroids, may also be prescribed for pain and swelling associated with gout. Drugs such as allopurinol, febuxostat and probenecid, which alter the levels of uric acid in the blood, may also be prescribed.

Keep in mind that no treatments are without side effects.

Gastrointestinal conditions such as stomachache, vomiting and diarrhea are possible with NSAIDs and colchicine. Uric acid-lowering agents may lower blood cell count or cause drowsiness, stomachache, headache or sore gums. You may experience other side effects, depending on your treatment regimen.

Important Safety Information: COLCRYS (colchicine, USP) tablets are indicated for the prophylaxis and treatment of acute gout flares in adults.

COLCRYS is contraindicated in patients with renal or hepatic impairment who are concurrently prescribed P-gp inhibitors or strong inhibitors of CYP3A4, as life-threatening or fatal toxicity has been reported. The most common adverse events in clinical trials for the prophylaxis and treatment of gout were diarrhea and pharyngolaryngeal pain. Rarely, myelosuppression, thrombocytopenia and leukopenia have been reported in patients taking colchicine. Rhabdomyolysis has been occasionally observed, especially when colchicine is prescribed in combination with other drugs known to cause this effect. Monitoring is recommended for patients with a history of blood dyscrasias or rhabdomyolysis.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call (800) FDA-1088.

You may also report negative side effects to the manufacturer of COLCRYS by calling (888) 351-3786. See www.colcrys.com for full Prescribing Information.

Where Can I Get More Information?

If you or a loved one has symptoms of gout, talk to a health care professional and visit www.colcrys.com.