



# GOUT MEDICATIONS DO'S AND DON'TS

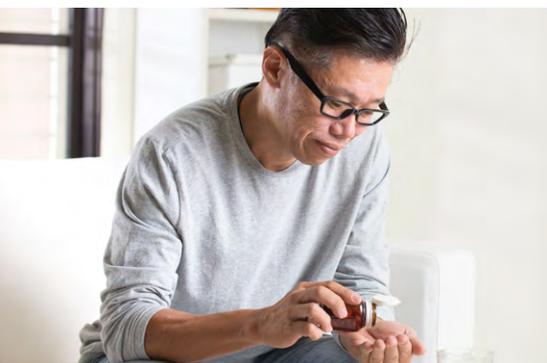
## DO

### Take your medications as directed.

You may be put on several medications for gout. Some help ease pain and others lower uric acid level. Continue to take your uric acid-lowering medication even if it causes flares early on or if you're not having any symptoms.

### Begin flare medications immediately.

The sooner you begin taking medicine for a gout flare, the quicker it will resolve. If you have medication for gout flares on hand, begin taking them at the earliest sign of a flare. If not, contact your doctor or go to an urgent care facility.



### Take the lowest possible dose of pain medication for the shortest duration of time.

To avoid serious cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, and kidney risks, you should use the lowest effective dose of the anti-inflammatory medication you and your doctor choose - whether its a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, colchicine, or a corticosteroid. These agents generally need to be continued for 5-7 days when initiated for a flare.

### Know your current uric acid level and your target uric acid level...

Knowing your uric acid level is as important as knowing your cholesterol level. Changes to your medication will depend on it. Patients with high uric acid levels may need to be on a more aggressive medication schedule.

### ...and "Go for Six!"

Aim for a healthy uric acid level of less than **6.0 mg/dL**. Your doctor will determine the level that is right for you. Certain medications and dietary and lifestyle changes can affect uric acid levels, so it's important to check your uric acid level every **six months** to ensure you remain at your target level.

Some people may have difficulty reaching their target uric acid level even if they are taking a uric acid-lowering medication and making necessary lifestyle changes. In these hard-to-treat cases, your doctor may recommend a combination of medications that work together to help reduce uric acid levels.

### Have a plan to handle the next gout flare.

Talk to your doctor before your next flare strikes so you have a plan ready for managing the pain. This will generally mean that you have a course of your anti-inflammatory medication readily available.



## DON'T

### Do not take aspirin for pain unless your doctor has put you on a low-dose (75-325 mg/day) regimen for heart disease prevention.

High-dose aspirin can abruptly change uric acid levels and make symptoms worse. If you have any other medical conditions that require taking aspirin, let your doctor know what you are taking and why.

### Do not stop taking medications that your doctor has prescribed.

Gout flares are common when starting urate-lowering therapy. This is a sign that the medication is working. Your body is trying to flush out the extra uric acid. If you are experiencing severe pain, talk to your doctor to create a pain plan.

### Do not try to push through the pain.

Seek medical attention or begin flare reduction medicine as soon as the flare begins. It will help you on your path to managing gout. You do not want to experience unnecessary pain and joint damage.

### Do not substitute natural "cures" or treatments for your medical professional's advice.

Just as gout has been around a long time, so have ideas about natural remedies or unproven therapies. Gout is a serious health condition that requires medical treatment. Each patient will have a different experience with symptoms and have unique health and treatment needs. Do not base your treatment plan or your progress towards managing symptoms with unproven remedies. If you are taking herbal or nutritional products, let your doctor know.

