



## Foot Health Fact Sheet

# GOUT

### Did you know...

One in 200 people are affected by gout and more men than women are affected. It tends to appear in middle age but can run in families also.

Arthritis is a disease of the joints which causes them to become inflamed and stiffen. There are three types of arthritis – Rheumatoid arthritis, Osteo-arthritis and the less common form, Gout.

#### What is gout and what causes it?

Gout is the result of an imbalance of uric acid in the body and manifests via a build-up of uric acid in the blood. Small crystals may form, which collect in the joint causing irritation and inflammation, and which can be very painful and severe.

Apart from the severe pain that gout causes, most other effects of gout are uncommon but it can include kidney damage via crystals forming to create kidney stones which are notorious for being extremely painful to pass.

#### What are the symptoms?

The main symptom of gout is waking up in the middle of the night with an acute throbbing pain in the big toe, which is swollen. Usually only one of the big toes is affected. The pain lasts for a few hours and usually subsides then doesn't return for a few months.

#### How do I prevent it?

You can reduce your chances of having attacks by leading a healthy lifestyle by:

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Eating a healthy diet including what you drink (i.e. avoiding too much alcohol or fizzy drinks)
- Making sure there is plenty of Vitamin C in your diet.

#### What are the treatments?

Gout can be controlled and regulated with anti-inflammatory drugs, which your GP will be able to prescribe, and these will alleviate the attack over 24 hours or so. An immediate measure is to levitate your leg to help reduce swelling along with the application of ice or cooling lotions while waiting for your medication to take effect.

Your local podiatrist will also be able to help alleviate issues by adapting your existing footwear with orthoses or other appliances which fit easily into your shoes and help redistribute pressure away from the affected parts.

Made-to-measure shoes can also be prescribed and your podiatrist will be able to advise you on the correct type of shoes to wear and where to obtain them. They can also provide protective shields for your toes or padding to relieve pressure and reduce friction. Any secondary problems like ulcers or corns can also be treated. They can also refer you to a specialist for more serious cases.



Find a podiatrist at [podiatry.org.au](http://podiatry.org.au)

This fact sheet is available as a single page download from [podiatry.org.au](http://podiatry.org.au)



# DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?



## DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- Can you only walk for a short period before your feet or legs hurt?
- Do you experience pain in your lower limbs at night?
- Do you experience tingling in your feet?
- Have you noticed your legs or feet are swollen?
- Do you have cuts or fissures on your feet that take a long time to heal?
- Are you returning to sport after an injury?
- Are you uncertain about which running or sports shoe to buy?
- Do you find that you wear out the outside of your shoes quickly?
- Have you noticed your toes poke holes in the top of your shoes?
- Does your forefoot become hot and painful after running or walking?
- Do your hips hurt?
- Has pain in your feet or legs stopped you from exercising?
- Are you worried about your child's feet?
- Do you have arthritis in your feet?
- Do you experience reoccurring gouty attacks?
- Are you worried about the thickness of your nails?
- Do you have discoloured toe nails?
- Are you worried about your foot odour?
- Do your toe nails cause you pain?
- Have you noticed your toes are clawed?
- Do you have hard skin on your feet? Is it getting worse?
- Do you find it hard to cut your own nails?
- Do you find it hard to fit your feet into shoes because of your bunion?

**Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.**

## GO SEE A PODIATRIST BECAUSE...

Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.

They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

## FIND A PODIATRIST NEAR YOU

Contact the Australian Podiatry Association at [podiatry.org.au](http://podiatry.org.au) and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



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