



# HARVEY R. DANCIGER, DPM

Advanced Foot and Ankle Care  
(760) 568-0108

## Gout

### What is Gout?

Gout is a very painful complex form of arthritis. It occurs when uric acid, which is a bodily waste product, deposits as little needle-like crystals in joints and/or soft tissues. Uric acid results from the breakdown of purines. Purines are found in many foods and normally the uric acid dissolves and is eliminated. When it can't be and accumulates, the result is inflammatory arthritis.

Gout can affect joints in ankles, knees, wrists, fingers and elbows. When it affects the foot, it usually occurs in the joints of the big toe. It can be acute or chronic and often attacks the patient in the middle of the night. Gout can last several days and then not appear again for months or even years. Over time though, gout attacks can happen more frequently and last for longer periods of time.

### What Causes Gout?

There are several risk factors involved with developing gout. The following is a list of causes and situations that put people at risk for developing gout or triggering an attack:

Having a family history of gout	Excessive consumption of alcohol
Being a male between 40-50 years of age	Eating too many foods rich in purines
Being a woman past the age of menopause	Having a medical problem such as renal insufficiency, high blood pressure or hypothyroidism
Being overweight	Taking certain medications such as diuretics

### What are the Symptoms of Gout?

Gout is a painful condition and the results of the uric acid build up could cause any number of the following symptoms:

Swelling	Stiffness in affected joint
Redness	Tenderness
Heat-feeling like your foot is on fire	Arthritis that occurs in one day resulting in a red and swollen joint
Sudden attack of pain	

### How is Gout Treated?

The good news is that gout is treatable. The goal that Dr. Danciger tries to achieve with his patients who have gout is to help them control the condition. Observing the right treatment plan, patients can reduce the severity of the attacks and lessen the risk of future ones.

Gout is most commonly treated using medications that treat the attack itself, reduce the risk of complications from having gout and help prevent future attacks. Dr. Danciger will be able to evaluate which medications would be most effective depending on the nature of your condition.

### How Can You Stay Healthy if you Have Gout?

Fortunately, there are many ways to stay healthy if you have gout. The most important factors are to stay ahead of the game in an effort to prevent an attack and acting quickly with treatment when an attack does arise. Here are several things you can do:

-On a regular basis and especially during an attack, drink plenty of water, about 2-4 liters each day.

-Avoid alcohol

-Exercise regularly and avoid foods rich in purines. These would include

- Anchovies
- Asparagus
- Game meats
- Mushrooms
- Gravy
- Sweetbreads
- Liver

With a few lifestyle modifications and treatment, you can prevent future episodes of this painful condition.