

Acute Gout

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Overview

Gout is a form of arthritis that is caused by a buildup of uric acid in the blood. Uric acid is a natural substance formed through the breakdown of certain foods. It is usually soluble, and is filtered out of the body by the kidneys. However, excessive uric acid can come out of solution, forming sharp crystals that can feel like broken glass inside your joints.

Symptoms

Symptoms often occur suddenly, and at night, and are severe enough to awaken you with sharp pain.

- Intense, sharp, burning pain and heat in a joint, often the big toe, but possibly in knees, elbows, wrists or fingers
- Pain is most intense within the first 4-12 hours of an attack, but it may linger for up to a few weeks
- Swelling, tenderness and heat in the affected joints
- Reduced range of motion in the affected joints

When to see a doctor

Untreated gout can result in joint damage. Make an appointment to see your doctor if:

- You experience sudden and intense joint pain
- You have a hot, reddened joint, and a fever