

Gout and NSAIDs

Summaries and decision aid

Information about gout and treatment

What is gout?

Gout is a type of arthritis in which there is a build up of uric acid in the joints of the body. Normally, the body makes uric acid and flushes out the excess in the urine. But in gout the body either makes too much uric acid or is unable to flush out the excess fast enough. When it builds up, the uric acid forms into crystals and deposits in the joints, especially in the big toe. It can deposit under the skin and in the kidneys. This causes pain, swelling, and tenderness in that area of the body. Attacks of gout may occur suddenly or the pain and swelling can come on slowly and last for long periods.

If left untreated, the attack may end after 7 to 10 days, but can last weeks. However, attacks will still occur with pain and swelling, and uric acid may build up and lead to

- tophi (uric acid deposits under the skin and elsewhere)
- limited ability to do daily activities
- kidney stones
- permanent damage to joints.

What can I do on my own to manage my disease?

- ✓ rest during attack
- ✓ cold packs
- ✓ relax
- ✓ avoid alcohol
- ✓ put less stress on joints
- ✓ maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ avoid excess carbohydrates and purines

What treatments are used for gout?

Five kinds of treatment may be used alone or together. The common (generic) names of treatment are shown below.

1. *Pain medicines and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for attacks*
 - Acetylsalicylic acid
 - Celecoxib
 - Diclofenac
 - Etodolac
 - Etoricoxib
 - Indomethacin
 - Ketoprofen
 - Meloxicam
 - Naproxen
 - Rofecoxib
 - Tolmetin
 - Valdecoxib
2. *Colchicine for attacks or to prevent gout*
 - Allopurinol
 - Benzbromarone
 - Probenecid
3. *Uric acid lowering drugs to prevent gout*
4. *Corticosteroid injections for attacks*
 - Adrenocorticosteroids
 - Adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH)
5. *Diet therapy*
 - Low purine diet
 - Low carbohydrate

What are my choices? How can I decide?

Treatment for your disease will depend on your condition. You need to know the good points (pros) and bad points (cons) about each treatment before you can decide.

Gout decision aid

Should I take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)?

This guide can help you make decisions about the treatment your doctor is asking you to consider.

It will help you to

- 1 Clarify what you need to decide.
- 2 Consider the pros and cons of different choices.
- 3 Decide what role you want to have in choosing your treatment.
- 4 Identify what you need to help you make the decision.
- 5 Plan the next steps.
- 6 Share your thinking with your doctor.

Step 1: Clarify what you need to decide

What is the decision?

Should I take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to decrease the pain and swelling in gout?

NSAIDs may be taken as a pill daily.

When does this decision have to be made? Check one

within days within weeks within months

How far along are you with this decision? Check one

I have not thought about it yet

I am considering the choices

I am close to making a choice

I have already made a choice

Step 2: Consider the pros and cons of different choices

What does the research show?

NSAIDs are classified as: **Likely beneficial**

There is 'Silver' level evidence from 8 studies of 366 people that tested NSAIDs. The studies lasted up to 2 weeks. These studies found pros and cons that are listed in the chart below.

What do I think of the pros and cons of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)?

- 1 Review the common pros and cons.
- 2 Add any other pros and cons that are important to you.
- 3 Show how important each pro and con is to you by circling from one (*) star if it is a little important to you, to up to five (*****) stars if it is very important to you.

PROS AND CONS OF NON-STEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS (NSAIDS)	
PROS (number of people affected)	How important is it to you?
Improves pain and swelling 83 out of 100 people had no pain or mild pain after 5 days of taking indomethacin	* * * * *
Decreases length of attack	* * * * *
Other pros:	* * * * *
CONS (number of people affected)	How important is it to you?
Gout may improve on its own without treatment after 7 to 10 days	* * * * *
Side effects: stomach and intestinal side effects, vomiting, headache, dizziness and tiredness 60 out of 100 people had side effects with indomethacin 11 out of 100 people stopped taking indomethacin because of side effects	* * * * *
May make high blood pressure worse and may not be safe in people with kidney disease	* * * * *
Rare serious harms 1 to 5 more people out of 100 will get a bleeding stomach ulcer or a hole in the lining of their gut when taking NSAIDs	* * * * *
Personal cost of medicine	* * * * *
Other cons:	* * * * *

What do you think of NSAIDs? Check one

Willing to consider this treatment
 Pros are more important to me than the cons

Unsure

Not willing to consider this treatment
 Cons are more important to me than the pros

Step 3: Choose the role you want to have in choosing your treatment

Check one

I prefer to decide on my own after listening to the opinions of others

I prefer to share the decision with: _____

I prefer someone else to decide for me, namely: _____

Step 4: Identify what you need to help you make the decision

What I know	Do you know enough about your condition to make a choice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Do you know which options are available to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Do you know the good points (pros) of each option?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Do you know the bad points (cons) of each option?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
What's important	Are you clear about which pros are most <i>important to you</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Are you clear about which cons are most <i>important to you</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
How others help	Do you have enough support from others to make a choice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Are you choosing without pressure from others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Do you have enough advice to make a choice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
How sure I feel	Are you clear about the best choice for you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Do you feel sure about what to choose?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure

If you answered No or Unsure to many of these questions, you should talk to your doctor.

Step 5: Plan the next steps

What do you need to do before you make this decision?

For example: talk to your doctor, read more about this treatment or other treatments for gout.

Step 6: Share the information on this form with your doctor

It will help your doctor understand what you think about this treatment.

Decisional Conflict Scale © A O'Connor 1993, Revised 1999.

Format based on the Ottawa Personal Decision Guide © 2000, A O'Connor, D Stacey, University of Ottawa, Ottawa Health Research Institute.