

# YOUR GOUT QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Gout & Infused Treatment



Perspective from **TERI PUHALSKY, BSN, RN, CRNI**

### What type of patients respond best to infused gout treatment?

Patients who have persistent uric acid deposits, called tophi, and experience uncontrolled flares even after they've made lifestyle and medication adjustments will usually respond well to infused medication. For these patients, infused treatment provides significant benefit.

### How does a patient prepare for infused treatment?

The health care provider will order a blood test for a specific deficiency called G6PD. If that is normal, then the patient can proceed. The patient will need to be off oral uric acid-lowering medication for one week before the first infusion.

Coverage and cost of treatment varies by patient. Once benefits are determined, the health care provider will send the prescription to a specialty pharmacy to obtain the medication and help the patient make an appointment for the first infusion. Patients may also be able to enroll in a medication assistance program.

### What is the infusion process like?

Once the patient gets settled into the infusion chair, an IV catheter will be placed. The first part of infusion is the pre-medications, which

take about 15 minutes to infuse. The patient will also receive acetaminophen tablets to take.

Then the main infusion will begin. The infusion will take about two hours. Patients may need to remain for about one hour after infusion for observation and to receive IV fluids.

The next infusion will be two weeks later. Patients will need to get a blood test to check their uric acid level 48 hours before that infusion.

### How would you advise gout patients to talk to their health care provider about starting infusion treatments?

Have an honest, open discussion about treatment goals and whether this is a viable option. Don't be afraid to ask questions, more than once if needed. I also advise getting written information from the health care provider about this treatment. Sometimes patients think of questions after they leave the office, so having written information may help.

### What advice would you give to people who are just getting started on treatment?

Please give the medication time. The tophi and uric acid build-up didn't happen overnight, so the medication will take some time to get those things under control.