

Patient Patient

With **LORI PASZTOR**

Alliance for Gout Awareness Patient Advocate



When did you learn you had gout?

I was diagnosed about a year ago after a particularly painful flare-up landed me in urgent care. I was finally referred to a rheumatologist then, but I've been having attacks for about 10 years.

I took steroids to treat chronic inflammation in my feet, but I still limped because of the swelling and pain. Eventually, I bought a pair of shoes that were two sizes larger than normal. Even in the dead of winter in Ohio, I preferred to wear sandals or go barefoot because of the pain.

Did genetics play a role for you?

Yes, my dad had gout. Growing up, I witnessed the anger and frustration that each painful flare brought him. But he never did anything about it. He never learned what triggered it for him or sought treatment. I grew up thinking debilitating gout pain was normal.

I have gout and now my son does, too. We look to each other for support. Having someone to lean on really makes a difference.

Q What do you wish you knew when you first experienced a flare?

I wish I'd known about the correlation between gout and kidney disease.

I was diagnosed with kidney disease in my 30s and underwent a kidney transplant at 42. It wasn't until one of my transplant check-ups almost two decades later that I learned kidney disease predisposes you to gout.

If I knew the conditions were related earlier, I probably would have been more proactive about getting diagnostic tests that could have shown I had gout. I could have started treatment years ago. Instead, I let it go until I needed a cane

to get around the house and a scooter in public. I was lucky to have one "good week" a month.

Q What advice would you offer someone with gout?

I'd tell them to learn about the disease and get treatment. I've taken both oral and infused medications, and I am thankful my rheumatologist and kidney transplant team coordinated to develop the best treatment plan for me.

I am back to living my life now, which includes chasing after my new puppy—a birthday gift from my kids.

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Gout Awareness

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