

# YOUR GOUT QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Gout & Medication



Perspective from **DAVID MANDEL, MD**

### What is the difference between treating an attack and managing chronic gout?

Treatment during a gout flare is focused on reducing symptoms like pain and inflammation. However, treating only the flare ignores the underlying cause. Gout attacks stem from persistently high uric acid levels. Gout arthritis can be effectively managed with medication that maintains a “normal” uric acid level.

Painful flares, long-term joint erosion and other serious risks can be avoided if uric acid is controlled.

### What types of medication treat a gout attack?

**NSAIDs**, or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents, are used to reduce inflammation and pain. They are the most common medications for immediate relief during an attack. Examples include naproxen and ibuprofen.

**Colchicine** has been used for many years to treat and help prevent gout attacks. However, it does not lower uric acid or eliminate deposits or uric acid in the joints. Colchicine can be used along with uric acid-reducing medications to prevent future attacks.

**Corticosteroids** help reduce inflammation and pain associated with gout attacks. They can be administered intravenously, as pills or by injection.

### What medications help regulate uric acid levels?

Maintaining a healthy uric acid level is the only way to manage gout long term, and medication is the most effective way to do so. Some medications reduce uric acid production, while others increase uric acid excretion.

**Allopurinol**, the standard first-line treatment, works by reducing the body’s production of uric acid.

**Febuxostat** is a similar drug that may work for people who don’t respond well to allopurinol.

**Probenecid** helps your body clear uric acid so it doesn’t build up.

All of these medications are aimed at preventing painful attacks by getting uric acid levels to the American College of Rheumatology’s recommended 6mg/dL.

Typically, these medications must be taken long term to prevent painful attacks, buildup of uric acid and arthritic complications.

### What if traditional medications haven’t worked?

Some patients struggle to find success with traditional oral treatments. If you are one of those patients, you still have options.

**Pegloticase** is a medication specifically for these type of patients. The therapy is administered via infusion every two weeks and works by converting uric acid into a compound that can be more easily excreted.

The medication is often given for several months. During this time the large deposits of uric acid that have accumulated on bones and joints dissolve.

### How can someone living with gout know which medications to take?

People with gout should work with their health care provider, preferably a gout specialist, to personalize their care plan – aimed at treating their gout, rather than just fighting through a flare.