

Home Care for Gout

Gout is a condition often mentioned in literature and historical records. Described as a painful inflammation of the limbs, especially the big toe, gout develops as a result of the buildup of uric acid crystals in the joints. Some people are more prone to it based on family history. Chances are that many of their ancestors suffered from it, as well. But other people get it due to their own physiology and lifestyle choices. A form of arthritis, a gout attack can be crippling and keep a person out of commission for one or more days while nursing their painful joints.

If you or someone you know suffers from this disease, you may be involved in home care to manage discomfort and help the person to get through the difficult attack. There are several things you can do to help someone cope with the inflammation and discomfort of gout.

1. Keep the foot elevated. It's hard to stay immobile for any length of time, let alone keep a foot aloft for several hours. Arrange a comfortable spot in the living room or family room where the person can remain part of family life and enjoy entertainments like the television, newspaper, and even guest visits. You might want to set up a second area in the bedroom where the person can rest in private or take a nap.

2. Make the support materials comfortable and firm. When propping the foot, use a solid pillow or folded blanket for support, taking care that they will not sag and gradually lower the foot. Place these in such a way that they are not likely to fall or tilt. Use clean and soft, rather than scratchy, fabric to keep the skin comfortable.

3. Avoid trigger foods. The doctor will provide a list of these, which include popular low-fat foods like turkey, so you will want to find suitable substitutes, especially if the person likes to keep turkey on hand for frequent meals. Go over the list with the gout sufferer and beside each forbidden food, come up with two or three replacements. Then shop for these and keep them on hand, since you never know when the next attack will occur, and they can come on suddenly.

4. Eat wholesome foods that reduce inflammation. The doctor should also be able to provide this list, which includes surprisingly tasty choices like cherries. Ask about flax seed oil as a supplement in addition to foods like salmon, with omega 3 oil, and tea, both of which have been shown to reduce or limit inflammation in the body.

5. Prepare diversions. Keep entertaining videos, interesting books, letter-writing materials, or even a laptop computer nearby. Hand-held puzzles, knitting or sewing, and other stationary games or distractions can be of help. As Hamlet said, "The readiness is all."

About the Author

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