As part of the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Program, your primary care provider (PCP) and PCMH Care Coordinator will provide you with information to help you manage your health. Below are general guidelines for your condition. Please work with your PCP or Care Coordinator for your specific health needs.

What is Gout?
Gout is a painful form of arthritis. Gout attacks happen when high levels of uric acid in your blood create sharp, needle-like crystals. These crystals build up around joints causing swelling and extreme pain that often come on suddenly.

Some conditions that can put you at risk of gout attacks are:
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Obesity
- Sickle cell anemia (and other anemias)
- Leukemia and other blood cancers

Diet and Changes You Can Make
Some foods should be avoided if you have a history of gout. These foods include:
- Dried beans and peas
- Asparagus, spinach and mushrooms
- Anchovies, sardines, herring, mackerel, scallops, tuna and shrimp
- Organ meats (brains, liver, kidneys and sweetbreads)
Here are some other diet changes that can help avoid gout attacks.

- Limit fatty foods such as gravies, salad dressings and fried foods. Saturated fat reduces the body’s ability to rid itself of uric acid.
- Cut back or avoid alcohol. Alcohol also interferes with the body’s elimination of uric acid.
- Eat enough carbohydrates, but avoid high-fructose corn syrup (a carbohydrate known to increase uric acid). Choose complex carbs including whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Drink plenty of water to help flush uric acid from your body.

If you are overweight, losing weight can reduce gout attacks. When dieting, avoid diet restriction plans that encourage fasting, rapid weight loss, or high protein weight loss. These diets can actually trigger gout attacks and may cause uric acid kidney stones to form.

**Treating a Gout Attack**

If you do suffer from a gout attack, see your PCP. Gout attacks left untreated can take anywhere from 3 to 10 days to resolve themselves. If you have chronic gout (multiple attacks), your PCP may prescribe medication and lifestyle changes to control recurring attacks.

In addition to medication:

- Drink plenty of fluids and completely avoid alcohol
- Rest
- Elevate and apply ice to the swollen joint

**Resources:**

Visit us at [www.mycarefirst.com](http://www.mycarefirst.com) for more information.

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Disorders
1 AMS Circle
Bethesda, Maryland 20892
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