Gout

Description
A gout attack occurs when uric acid crystals collect in the fluid joints. The needle-like crystals cause inflammation and severe pain. Gout most commonly affects the toes, ankles, or knees.

Risk Factors
- Age
- Male gender
- Family history
- Diabetes, thyroid disorders or kidney disorders
- Degenerative joint disease
- Obesity
- Excess Alcohol intake

Precipitating Factors
- Alcohol binge
- Dehydration
- Fasting
- Trauma
- Emotional stress
- Surgery
- Certain medications such as water pills

General measures
- Taking fluid from the joint with a needle may be done to confirm the diagnosis (by finding urate crystals in the fluid of the involved joint)

Frequent signs and symptoms
- The joint and or surrounding tissue is red, hot, and swollen
- Onset is sudden, often without a known cause
- Usually affects a single joint

Medication
- Take prescribed gout medications at the earliest sign of attack.
- Prompt treatment can help speed recovery.
- There are medicines to help prevent gout attacks in the future.
- Many medications are available to treat gout. Your health care provider will prescribe the appropriate medication for you.

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**Expected outcome**
- There is a very high success rate with treatment
- Attacks usually recur unless uric acid levels are reduced in your blood

**Call the Telephone Care Program 1-800-455-0057 if:**
- Pain, swelling, redness not improved within 1-2 days
- If you develop similar symptoms in another joint
- If you have fever or chills
- If you develop stomach pain and or black stools while on medication

**Preventive measures**
- Weight control
- Limit alcohol intake
- Good hydration
- Severe diet restriction unnecessary