

Gout Drugs

Gout is a common form of arthritis caused by a disturbance in purine metabolism. Such disturbance gives rise to elevated level of blood uric acid, resulting in an accumulation of urate and thus inflammation and pain in the joints. In severe cases, it may lead to deformation of joints. Apart from joints, excessive urate may accumulate in other parts of the body, such as the kidneys, and cause damages.

Gout is associated with hereditary factors, but it may also be easily triggered by overeating. Therefore, gout is also known as a “rich man’s disease”.

Classification of Gout Drugs

Gout drugs can be classified into two categories, acute and chronic:

1. Drugs for acute gout: They can quickly reduce acute joint pain and relieve swelling to enable normal joint movement. Common examples are NSAID and colchicine.
2. Drugs for chronic gout: They can prevent gout attack by accelerating the excretion of uric acid and balancing the level of blood uric acid. Common examples are allopurinol and probenecid.

Most of these drugs can only be sold on doctor’s prescription in registered dispensaries. To avoid danger, refrain from indiscriminate self-medication before seeking medical diagnosis.

Side Effects of the Drugs

1. Drugs for acute gout usually cause stomach upset and are therefore best taken after meals or with antacids.
2. Drugs for chronic gout are mostly safe and reliable. In rare cases, patients develops allergic reactions such as skin rash, itchiness, nausea, headache, stomachache and fatigue after medication. If the side effects persist or you are in doubt, consult your doctor right away.

Advice on Medication

1. Make sure whether you need drugs for acute gout or drugs for chronic gout. Drugs for acute gout are usually taken for a period of time only while those for

chronic gout must be taken on a long-term basis. Do not stop medication unless instructed by your doctor.

2. Take the prescribed dosage at fixed intervals. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible unless it is almost time for the next scheduled dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and take the next dose as directed. Do not take double doses.

Life Adaptations

Gout cannot be treated by medication alone. Patients should avoid the following food in their daily lives to prevent triggering gout attacks:

1. Quit smoking and alcohol.
2. Offal such as brains, livers, kidneys, hearts and spleens.
3. Seafood such as sardines, fish roe and shellfish like scallops and mussels.
4. Excessive amount of meat, poultry and fish.
5. Excessive amount of beans, mushrooms, cauliflower, spinach and fresh asparagus.

Patients should also drink plenty of water (at least two litres a day) to help remove excessive uric acid from the body.

Although there is no radical cure for the disease, gout attacks can be effectively prevented with dietary control and proper medication.

Storage of the Drugs

The drugs should be stored in a dry and cool place. Generally, they do not need to be refrigerated unless otherwise stated in the drug labels. Also, they should be stored properly to avoid accidents of mistaken consumption by children.