

## **STEINBERG PODIATRY ASSOCIATES P.A.**

### **Gout**

Gout is a disease in which the body builds up too much "uric acid". Uric Acid is a waste product resulting from the breakdown of substances called purines. Purines are found in most food, but some foods are particularly high in purines. Uric Acid is dissolved in the blood until it is passed into the urine through the kidneys. In people with gout, the uric acid changes into crystals that deposit in joints and other tissues. During an attack of gout, crystals accumulate in a joint and irritate the joint lining, causing it to become inflamed. The joint will appear shiny red or purple; the area around it will be very tender.

A gout attack can be caused by: drinking alcohol, binge eating, surgery, crash diets, or an injury to or near the joint. Uric acid crystals can deposit in almost any joint. The big toe is the most common location. The knee, ankle, foot, hand, and wrist are also common places where gout is found. Gout is diagnosed by a blood test or microscopic analysis of the joint fluid. A blood sample is taken to see how high the uric acid is in your blood.

Gout can be treated with a medication, Allopurinol (zyloprim), which lowers the uric acid in the blood. The medication must be taken faithfully. Follow up blood work is performed to monitor the uric acid level in your blood. From the results the dosage can be adjusted. By taking the medication faithfully you can help prevent future attacks of gout. Yearly blood tests are required to monitor the uric acid in your blood. With increased age the dosage that is required may be lowered. This is a medication that most people remain on for life. If you seem to be running out of your medication and are not sure if you should be taking it, or if any other questions arise, you can call the office. At the onset of a gout attack, the medication is often combined with other medicines or injections to help reduce the inflammation or pain.

To help your treatment be more successful and avoid future attacks:

- 1) Eat a well balanced diet.
- 2) Moderation or avoidance of foods highest in purines: Sweetbreads, Liver, Kidney, Brains, Sardines, Anchovies, Asparagus, Mushrooms, Mussels, Sausage, processed luncheon meat, Herring, & Meat extracts: consume, meat gravies, or broth.
- 3) Avoid excessive alcohol intake, binge eating, & crash diets.
- 4) To help neutralize uric acid eat: fruit, vegetables, juice, cherries, & strawberries.
- 5) Schedule yearly blood tests in advance to avoid running out of your prescription.