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Tasty Holiday Meals Can Trigger Painful Toes

With the most festive season of the year here, be aware that sudden changes in your diet can trigger painful gout attacks, especially in your feet.

Gout attacks are caused by the accumulation and crystallization of uric acid in joint tissues. Because the big toe joint is the coolest part of the body and uric acid is sensitive to temperature change, the big toe is most often affected by this painful condition.

Foods high in purines contribute to uric acid build-up and we recommend patients who are prone to gout attacks avoid purine-rich items such as shellfish (shrimp, crab, etc.), organ meats (kidney, liver, etc.), red meat, red wine and beer.

Gout can be treated with medications, diet changes, increasing consumption of appropriate fluids, and elevating and immobilizing the foot. If you are suffering from pain in your feet or big toe this holiday season, call our office and make an appointment to have an exam.



What You Can't See This Winter Can Hurt You

Whether you live in a cold-weather climate or you're visiting one, the winter season can be misleading. The snow is beautiful, but beware of what can lie underneath the beauty, including "black ice" and icy walkways. Use caution while outside to help prevent ankle sprains and fractures from ruining your season.

► Wear the Right Shoes for the Weather

Wear shoes or boots with a low heel and traction soles to ensure a more secure footing. If you need to wear high-heeled shoes, bring them in a tote and change into them when you arrive at your destination.

► Check for Slippery Areas

Watch your step when exiting your car or walking out of a building. Take notice of any potentially icy areas. Keep your hands free to support and help provide balance in case you begin to fall.

► Keep Areas Near Doorways Well-Lit and Clear of Ice and Snow

Prevent your guests from falling upon entering or leaving your house this winter by keeping stairs and sidewalks well lit and clear of snow and ice.



► Don't Ignore an Injured Foot or Ankle

If you do suffer an injury, don't delay in calling our office for prompt evaluation and treatment or seeking immediate care at your local Emergency Department. In the meantime, the R.I.C.E. method should be followed.

R.I.C.E. Method

Rest:

Stay off the injured foot or ankle; walking may cause further injury.

Ice:

Apply an ice pack to the injured area, placing a thin towel between the ice and the skin. Use ice for 20 minutes and then wait at least 40 minutes before icing again.

Compression:

An elastic wrap should be used to control swelling, but not so tight it cuts off circulation.

Elevation:

The injured foot or ankle should be raised slightly above the level of your heart to reduce swelling.

Delaying treatment can result in long-term complications such as chronic ankle instability and pain, arthritis or deformity. Remember, just because you can walk on the injured foot, it doesn't mean you should. You may still have a serious injury.

Don't Let the Cold Nip at Your Toes

This winter don't let frostbite get the best of you; make sure you're dressed appropriately for the weather, including bundling up your feet and toes.

Frostbite can occur when skin is exposed to extreme cold, resulting in tissue damage and possible tissue loss. Your fingers, toes and areas of commonly exposed skin, like the nose and cheeks, are at risk. When frostbite strikes in the foot, it typically develops in stages beginning with cold toes that then turn bright red in color. Over time, the color in the toes continues to change and darkens into purples and blues and eventually black, indicating severe frostbite.

- ▶ Patients with diabetic neuropathy, or loss of feeling in the feet, are especially at risk and should check their toes regularly for signs of frostbite.
- ▶ Another symptom of frostbite is numbness in the toes; however, numb toes can also be a symptom of other conditions.

If you are experiencing numbness or discoloring in the tissue of your toes, call our office to schedule an appointment. If you suspect the numbness is due to frostbite, seek medical attention immediately.

