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MEET OUR TEAM Monica Pennix

We are pleased to welcome Monica Pennix to the NorthPointe team. Monica joins us as a Medical Assistant.

Monica attended Wayne County Community College for nursing before deciding to become a medical assistant. She then finished her schooling at the National Institute of Technology (now Everest College).

As a medical assistant, she performs a variety of clinical and clerical actions to expedite patient flow and activities in the office. Once examined by the doctor, Monica will follow any directions he may give to complete your care.



Monica is very family oriented, with four children and six grandchildren. She has a passion for learning new things. During her free time she enjoys bowling, reading and playing games on her phone.

GOUT

Gout is a disorder that results from the build-up of uric acid in the tissues or a joint. It most often affects the joint of the big toe.

Gout attacks are caused by deposits of crystallized uric acid in the joint. Uric acid is present in the blood and eliminated in the urine, but in people who have gout, uric acid accumulates and crystallizes in the joints. Uric acid is the result of the breakdown of purines, chemicals that are found naturally in our bodies and in food. Some people develop gout because their kidneys have difficulty eliminating normal amounts of uric acid, while others produce too much uric acid.

Gout occurs most commonly in the big toe because uric acid is sensitive to temperature changes. At cooler temperatures, uric acid turns into crystals. Since the toe is the part of the body that is farthest from the heart, it's also the coolest part of the body – and, thus, the most likely target of gout. However, gout can affect any joint in the body.



The tendency to accumulate uric acid is often inherited. Other factors that put a person at risk for developing gout include: high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, surgery, chemotherapy, stress, and certain medications and vitamins. For example, the body's ability to remove uric acid can be negatively affected by taking aspirin, some diuretic medications ("water pills"), and the vitamin niacin (also called nicotinic acid). While gout is more common in men aged 40 to 60 years, it can occur in younger men as well as in women.

Consuming foods and beverages that contain high levels of purines can trigger an attack of gout. Some foods contain more purines than others and have been associated with an increase of uric acid, which leads to gout. You may be able to reduce your chances of getting a gout attack by limiting or avoiding shellfish, organ meats (kidney, liver, etc.), red wine, beer, and red meat.

Symptoms

An attack of gout can be miserable, marked by the following symptoms:

- Intense pain that comes on suddenly – often in the middle of the night or upon arising
- Signs of inflammation such as redness, swelling, and warmth over the joint.

Treatment

Initial treatment of an attack of gout typically includes the following:

- **Medications.** Prescription medications or injections are used to treat the pain, swelling, and inflammation.
- **Dietary restrictions.** Foods and beverages that are high in purines should be avoided, since purines are converted in the body to uric acid.
- **Fluids.** Drink plenty of water and other fluids each day, while also avoiding alcoholic beverages, which cause dehydration.
- **Immobilize and elevate the foot.** Avoid standing and walking to give your foot a rest. Also, elevate your foot (level with or slightly above the heart) to help reduce swelling.

The symptoms of gout and the inflammatory process usually resolve in three to ten days with treatment.

If gout symptoms continue despite the initial treatment, or if repeated attacks occur, see your primary care physician for maintenance treatment that may involve daily medication. In cases of repeated episodes, the underlying problem must be addressed, as the build-up of uric acid over time can cause arthritic damage to the joint.

In some cases of gout, surgery is required to remove the uric acid crystals and repair the joint. Your NorthPointe foot and ankle surgeon will determine the procedure that would be most beneficial to your case.

Receive our monthly newsletter.
Send your email address to:
Doctors@NorthPointeFoot.com

Diet and Gout

If your healthcare provider has recommended reducing high-purine foods in your diet, you may find the following guidelines helpful:

- Limit your consumption of certain types of meat. Meat items that are particularly high in purines include beef, pork, lamb and “organ meats” (such as liver, kidney and brain), as well as meat extracts and gravies.
- Reduce or eliminate alcohol consumption, especially beer.
- High consumption of seafood is associated with an increased risk of Gout. Specific types of seafood found to be associated with higher levels of uric acid include: anchovies, sardines, roe (fish eggs), herring, mussels, codfish, scallops, trout and haddock.



- High-purine vegetables **do not** increase the risk of gout or recurring gout attacks. A healthy diet based on lots of fruits and vegetables can include high-purine vegetables, such as asparagus, spinach, peas, cauliflower or mushrooms.
- Consider beans or lentils, which are moderately high in purines but are also a good source of protein.
- There is some evidence that eating cherries is associated with a reduced risk of gout attacks.

AVOID FROSTBITE

Frostbite occurs when a body part is exposed to extreme cold. If conditions are cold enough for the water within the tissues to freeze and form ice crystals, cell death can occur. The feet, hands, ears and nose are particularly prone to frostbite due to their location away from the body's core.

Mild exposure to cold typically produces pain and irritation of the skin. Greater exposure may produce burning and numbness as well as blistering and reversible damage to the outer skin layers. Eventually, there will be complete loss of sensation and permanent damage to all layers of the skin, arteries, muscles and tendons.

Frostbite can be prevented by limiting exposure and keeping the feet as warm and dry as possible. If, however, frostbite is suspected, the feet should be rapidly rewarmed by immersion in warm water (approximately 100 degrees Fahrenheit). Avoid vigorous rubbing/massaging and dry heat (such as from a hair dryer), as burns may result if numbness is present. To avoid infection, blisters or damaged skin should be treated with antibiotic cream and loose bandages.

Frostbite is a very serious injury that can involve significant damage to feet. Therefore, prompt diagnosis and proper treatment by your NorthPointe doctor is essential. In severe cases, surgery is sometimes necessary.

Is it Time for New Diabetic Shoes?



Do you, or someone you know, wear diabetic shoes? Has it been a year since the current pair was received? If so, this may be a good time to order a new pair of diabetic shoes through the Federal Diabetic Shoe Program. On an annual basis, Medicare will cover the cost of one pair of diabetic shoes and inserts for diabetic patients that qualify.

Why Special Shoes?

It is important for persons with diabetes to have shoes with good air circulation and minimal to no inside stitching to help prevent rubbing or irritation of the skin. By ensuring proper fit and good air circulation, properly designed diabetic shoes prevent pressure ulcers, encourage good blood circulation, and allow the skin to breathe.

Shoes are designed in styles for work, exercise, leisure and social activities. Even diabetic patients without Medicare are strongly encouraged to make an appointment at NorthPointe Foot & Ankle to receive a comprehensive, ten point foot exam. Amputations and serious diabetic foot problems can be prevented with early diagnosis and proper care.

In addition to shoes, the practice offers many items designed specifically for diabetic patients - socks, slippers, lotions, wound care ointment, etc.

Berkley Parks & Recreation WINTERFEST 2018

As a sponsor of the 2018 WinterFest, NorthPointe Foot & Ankle would like to invite you, your friends and family to join in the day of fun! WinterFest is a FREE annual event designed to embrace the cold weather and celebrate Michigan's winter season. It is a great event for the whole family - with plenty of activities including an outdoor petting zoo, arts & crafts, cookie decorating, ice skating, a soup cook-off, ice sculptures and more!



Saturday, February 3 12:00—3:00 PM
Berkley Community Center Complex, 2400 Robina, Berkley
For more information call: 248-658-3470

PARKS & RECREATION

