

Intra-articular corticosteroid injections are highly effective in treating acute gout for patients with only one affected joint.

Oral steroids: prednisolone 30mg dly for one-three days, with subsequent dose tapering over one to two weeks.

Corticosteroids may cause fewer adverse events than other acute treatments when used short term, particularly in the elderly.

Prophylaxis of gout

Lifestyle alterations and adjusting medication regimens can prevent subsequent attacks.

However, if pts have one or more acute attacks within 12 months of an initial attack, uric acid lowering therapy is needed to prevent further flare-ups.

Prophylaxis should be started after the first attack for certain patient groups such as; patients with visible gouty tophi, pts with renal insufficiency, pts with uric acid stones, pts who need to continue diuretics.

The aim of prophylactic treatment of gout; to maintain serum uric acid levels below the saturation point of monosodium urate; if serum urate is maintained below this level, crystal deposits dissolve.

The British Society for Rheumatology (BSR) recommends maintaining plasma urate below 300micromol/L to prevent further attacks.

Should never be started during an acute attack.

Should be started 1-2 weeks after the attack has settled.

An NSAID or colchicine should be used as a prophylactic treatment and continued for at least one month after the hyperuricaemia has been corrected, at the start of the treatment, one may have an acute attack due to the shift in the plasma uric acid concentration.

a) Allopurinol

Allopurinol is the medicine of choice for prophylaxis in the management of recurrent gout. It inhibits synthesis of uric acid by competitively inhibiting xanthine oxidase, which is the enzyme catalysing the hypoxanthine-xanthine-uric acid reaction.

Pts with normal renal function: starting dose is 100mg dly, increased gradually in 100mg increments every two to three weeks until the optimal serum urate level (<300micromol/L) or the maximum dose (900mg per day in divided doses) is reached.