

Gout & the Family and Medical Leave Act: Your Rights in the Workplace

Gout can be debilitating, and flare-ups can significantly impact patients' ability to continue their day-to-day tasks, especially in the workplace.

But there are policies in place that protect patients at work, including the Family and Medical Leave Act.



What is FMLA?

FMLA is a federal law that allows employees to take leave from work for qualifying medical and family reasons.

Under FMLA, employees may take a total of 12 weeks of leave in a 12-month period, which is equal to the number of hours normally worked per week. The leave is unpaid but job-protected, meaning that when an employee returns, they must resume the same position as before. Employees will also keep their employer-provided health insurance.

Qualifications

To qualify for FMLA leave, employees must:

- ✓ Have worked for their employer for at least 1,250 hours during the past 12 months
- ✓ Have a serious medical condition or have to care for a family member with a serious medical condition

Gout and FMLA

Gout qualifies as a serious medical condition for FMLA leave if it:



Requires ongoing medical treatment



Causes periods of inability to work for more than at least 3 consecutive days that require medical attention



Leads to chronic flares that would require nonconsecutive days of leave

Since gout flares can be unpredictable and debilitating, employees with gout can take occasional rather than continuous FMLA leave.

How to Take FMLA Leave

In most circumstances, employees requesting FMLA leave should:



Follow the employer's normal policies for requesting leave



Alert the employer that FMLA leave specifically is requested



Provide notice of leave as soon as possible

Under FMLA, the employer is allowed to request certification of a serious health condition from a provider.

Gout can be debilitating and unpredictable, but FMLA can help gout patients manage in the workplace.



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