



Muscle Cramping/Spasms

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WHAT CAUSES MUSCLE CRAMPS

- Overusing muscles, especially during exercises or post-surgical recovery
- Dehydration or electrolyte imbalance
- Vitamin/Mineral Deficiencies (Calcium, potassium, sodium, and magnesium)
- Remaining in one position for too long
- Inadequate blood supply to legs and feet
- Medical conditions such as: Pregnancy, spinal nerve compression, alcoholism, kidney failure, and hypothyroidism

WAYS TO PREVENT MUSCLE CRAMPING/SPASMS

- Hydration, hydration, hydration.
- Making sure that you are eating a proper, balanced, diet.
- Foods that may help prevent muscle cramping/spasms
 - Bananas
 - Sweet Potatoes
 - Avocado
 - Beans/Lentils
 - Melon (Watermelon, Cantaloupe)
 - Milk
 - Pickle, orange, or tomato juice
 - Dark, leafy greens
 - Salmon
 - Seeds/Nuts
 - Vitamin B Complex
 - Tonic water
- Visiting with your primary care provider to make sure that you are not deficient in any minerals/vitamins and to rule out underlying conditions.
- Minimizing caffeine and alcohol intake



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WAYS TO TREAT MUSCLE SPASMS IN THE MOMENT

- Gatorade, Pedialyte, Liquid IV all contain electrolytes and can be helpful in the middle of an attack.
- Get up and go for a short walk around the house
- Stretch and massage. Stretch the cramped muscle and gently rub it to help it relax. Using essential oils such as marjoram, lavender, peppermint, helichrysum, chamomile, sandalwood, eucalyptus, rosemary, yarrow, or cypress can help alleviate symptoms.
- Apply heat or cold. Use a warm towel or heating pad on tense or tight muscles. Taking a warm bath (if cleared to do so) or directing the stream of a hot shower onto the cramped muscle also can help.

MUSCLE CRAMPS VS BLOOD CLOT

One risk of any surgery is a blood clot or DVT. This is something that, if left untreated, can go on to cause other more serious situations. It can be difficult to determine if calf pain is a blood clot or a muscle cramp. We do use Aspirin, or your pre-operative anticoagulant, after surgery to help prevent blood clots, but this is always something that we keep in the back of our mind.

Some signs to watch for:

- A blood clot will most often only occur in one extremity.
- Pain will usually worsen with time and does not come and go
- Redness or raw/tender area, often in the posterior aspect of the leg, below the knee
- Veins will feel hard or swollen when touched

Please contact the office if you have any of these symptoms as an ultra-sound may be needed to further assess this.