



Muscle cramps

Kiddos competing with pain

Ouch! That hurts! A muscle cramp is a temporary, but intense and painful involuntary contraction of muscles that can occur during or after exercise. The intensity and duration of muscle cramps can vary from a minor spasm that resolves quickly, to a “lock up” that can last several minutes. In some cases, muscle pain may persist for hours and prevent returning to activity.

Why does it happen?

- Exercise
- Dehydration
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Fatigue
- High temperatures
- History of muscle cramps

What are the treatments?

- Stretching at the onset of cramping to reduce pain and tension of the muscle
- Gradual hydration and electrolyte replacement, being sure not to consume large quantities of water too quickly
- Continued stretching, hydration and removal from activity as needed until muscle cramping ends

How do you prevent them?

- Consistent stretching before activities, and on a regular basis for areas that are more prone to muscle cramps
- Sufficient hydration prior to activities, as well as adequate electrolyte intake
- Rest as needed to prevent fatigue during activity
- Appropriate training to build up endurance for sports
- Proper diet and nutrition

When can athletes return to activity?

This depends on the athlete and their severity of muscle cramping. Some athletes have mild muscle cramps and are able to return to activities after stretching and rehydrating. Other athletes may take several days to recover from more severe cases.

We can help!

Schedule an appointment with our sports medicine doctors to get back in the game.

We can create an at-home strengthening and stretching program to give young athletes relief.



Cook Children's Orthopedics and Sports Medicine locations:

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To schedule an appointment
or learn more,
call 682-885-4405.

We accept most insurances.



For more info visit:
cookchildrens.org/sports-medicine