

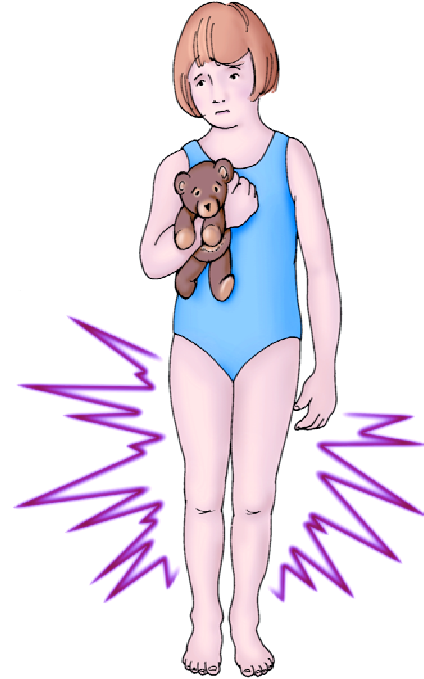
Juvenile Myalgias

“Growing Pains”

Many children between the ages of 3 and 8 experience unexplained pains, usually in the legs and usually at night. These pains may awaken them from a deep sleep or may occur just as they are falling asleep. Typically simple treatments such as massage, warm baths, or over-the-counter medications (Tylenol or ibuprofen) relieve the symptoms and the child is able to fall back to sleep. The next day the child is back to normal, running and playing without any evidence of the previous night's symptoms.

The specific cause of ‘Growing Pains’ is unknown. One explanation is that they are the result of overuse and muscle fatigue. The cumulative result of days or hours of hard play results in nighttime muscle pain and cramping. ‘Growing Pains’ do not result in any permanent or long term problems with the child's growth or development.

In fact, if the pain does not go away in a short period of time or if the child is not able to play normally the following day, then the diagnosis of ‘growing pains’ must be questioned.



Treatment usually consists of ibuprofen or Aleve given at bedtime **every** night for **several weeks** and until the child's pain pattern is improved. Limiting the child's activities during the day is also sometimes necessary.

If the symptoms do not improve on their own or with simple remedies like ibuprofen and gentle massage, then an orthopedic consultation may be necessary. Back pain, fever, limp, refusal to walk, swelling in the joints or unexplained weight loss are not typical of ‘growing pains’ and are reasons to investigate further. Evaluation of a child with these symptoms may include blood work, x-rays, bone scan, MRI or CT scan.



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