

Growing Pains

Growing pains are not a disease. But they can hurt. They happen to 25% to 40% of children when kids are 3 to 5 and 8 to 12. There is no evidence that growth of bones actually causes pain. Many believe that kids get growing pains because they've tired out their muscles. When you're running, climbing, or jumping a lot during the day, that can be hard on your musculoskeletal system. You may have aches and pains in your legs at night from overuse during the day and that is most likely the cause of growing pains.

Growing pains don't hurt around the bones or joints. They hurt in the leg muscles. Most of the time they hurt in the front of the thighs (the upper part of your legs), in the calves (the back part of your legs below your knees), or behind the knees. It's usually also in both legs. Growing pains often strike in late afternoon or evening but are gone the next morning.

Until you outgrow them, your parents can help your growing pains feel better. They can give you an over-the-counter pain medication like acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Here are a few other things that may help also:

1. Place a heating pad on the spot where your legs hurt.
2. Have your parent massage your legs.
3. Stretch your legs like you do in gym class.

For most kids, growing pains stop once you reach your teens.



While growing pains are harmless, some types of leg pains may be caused by underlying conditions that can be treated. If you have a fever, are limping when you walk, your leg or legs look red or swollen and you still hurt in the morning, you should tell your parents. They will most likely take you to the doctor to get checked out.

