



## Leg Cramps in Pregnancy

Leg cramps are common and usually occur in the last half of pregnancy. The cramps are due to painful muscle spasms and often occur in the calves at night. They are thought to be a secondary buildup of lactic and pyruvic acids leading to involuntary spasms of the affected muscles but the exact reason is unknown. \*

A study was done and showed a possible benefit to treating leg cramps with magnesium supplementation. [the study involved 69 pregnant women with persistent leg cramps] They used magnesium lactate or magnesium citrate, 120 mg elemental Mg, in the morning and 240mg elemental Mg in the evening. (Magnesium comes as 250 mg tablets so ½ a pill in the morning and 1 pill in the evening)

Stretching exercises may also be an effective preventative measure. These can be performed in the weight-bearing position (standing up) and held for 10-30 seconds, then repeated five times. These exercises may be repeated twice each day. \*

If a cramp occurs, calf stretches by flexing your foot, (do not point your toes), walking, or leg jiggling followed by leg elevation may be helpful.

Other remedies include:

- A hot shower or warm tub bath
- Massage of the affected muscles with ice
- Regular exercise for conditioning, calf-strengthening and stretching
- Drinking more water

(references include \*Uptodate and RDA recommendations)

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