LEG CRAMPS IN PREGNANCY

WHAT ARE THEY?

Often striking at night, leg cramps are common and usually occur in the last half of pregnancy. The cramps are often caused by painful involuntary muscle spasms that normally affects the calf, foot, toes or all of the above.

CAUSE:

Although the exact reason is unknown, maternal weight gain, impaired circulation, pressure from the growing baby on the nerves that travel to your legs can be some of the causes for leg cramps.

SUPPLEMENTATION THERAPY:

Supplementing with calcium and magnesium pills might offer some benefit to this discomfort. Calcium citrate 250 mg and magnesium lactate or magnesium citrate/oxide 250mg can be purchased together in the form of one pill at your local pharmacy. By taking 120-150mg of elemental Magnesium in the morning, and one 250 mg of elemental magnesium at night might help minimize the frequency of tightenings felt in the calf.

WHAT TO DO AS IT STRIKES:

Once the cramp is present, straightened the legs and point the toes upward in the direction of your knee. Massage the affected area after with a hot water bottle or ice.

ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES/COMFORT MEASURES:

- Stretching the legs at least twice daily with the push-away exercise: stand facing a wall one arm’s length away. Lean forward, holding oneself with the hands, and hold the position for 10 seconds, keeping heels on the floor and body in a straight line. Push away from the wall, returning to the standing positon. Repeat 4 times.
- A warm bath at bedtime (Epsom salts may be used).
- Massage the affected muscles with ice or warm towel
- Avoid prolonged sitting or standing; elevate legs periodically
- Stay hydrated

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