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Leg Cramps

Cancer and its treatment may cause leg cramps and other types of muscle cramps. Cramps or spasms are painful tightening of the muscles in the leg, ankle, or foot.

- [What causes leg cramps?](#)
- [What to look for](#)
- [Managing leg cramps](#)
- [Call the cancer care team right away if your loved one](#)

What causes leg cramps?

Some causes of leg cramps in people who have cancer include:

- Certain chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy medicines
Radiation therapy to the lower extremities (hips, legs, et7.35 4f0 g ET q BT 1 0 0 1 87.6 337.93 Tr

What caregivers can do

- Help your loved one gently stretch the tight muscle.
- Use a heat or cold pack to gently rub the cramped muscle. Ask the cancer care team which they think would be most helpful.
- If medicines are prescribed for cramping, be sure they are taken as directed. Watch your loved one in case they become dizzy or unsteady.
- Contact the cancer care team if your loved one has cramping that's not relieved by cold, heat, massage, or by stretching the cramped muscle.

Call the cancer care team right away if your loved one

- Has a cramped leg that becomes red, swollen, hard, tender, or warm.
- Has pain in the chest, arm, back, shoulder, or jaw, or sudden coughing, increased heart rate or is feeling light-headed. This can be an urgent problem and you might need to go to the nearest emergency room.
- Has cramping that lasts for more than 6 to 8 hours.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/risk-and-prevention/tamoxifen-and-raloxifene-for-breast-cancer-prevention.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/pain/peripheral-neuropathy.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/eating-problems/fluids-and-dehydration.html

References

National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN). *Palliative care*. Version 2.2023. Accessed November 29, 2023 at <https://www.nccn.org/guidelines/guidelines-detail?category=3&id=1454>.

Winkelman J. Nocturnal leg cramps. In: Post TW, ed. *Uptodate*. Uptodate; 2022. Nocturnal leg cramps - UpToDate

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Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as journalists, editors, and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

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