

# Your Next Step, P.C.

## FOOT NOTES

May 2010

### **SPECIAL EVENTS!**

- ◆ On-Line Shopping at Your Next Step
- ◆ Night Cramps -- [www.foot-pain.com](http://www.foot-pain.com)

#### **Something New!**

#### **On-Line Shopping at Your Next Step**

To find and purchase your item(s) on our online store:

1. Visit [www.yournextstep.net](http://www.yournextstep.net)
2. Click on the "Foot Care Store" link.
3. Search for your product by "Manufacturer" or your "Condition."
4. Once you find your product, add it to your "Shopping Cart."
5. Follow the instructions on our site to pay by credit card (Our online store is a "secure site", which you can trust with credit card information).
6. Expect to receive your order by mail in 3-5 business days.

### **Night Cramps**

Night cramps are muscle spasms that occur primarily in the calf muscles behind the lower leg and in the small foot muscles on the bottom of the foot. It seems out of nowhere the attack will occur with pain ranging from mild to moderately severe. In some cases just staying in bed and allowing the spasm to run its course is enough. Others find that when a night cramp occurs it can be so painful that it forces them out of bed in order to stretch the muscle and relieve the pain.

The cramp can last for a few minutes or as long as up to ten minutes. Once it has finished it is not uncommon to have another. Thus this condition can make for a very restless sleep.

Muscle cramps should not be mistaken for restless leg syndrome. The cramps particularly in the leg can be so severe that the muscle is tender the next day.

Most muscle cramps occurring in the foot and leg are known as idiopathic (unknown origin). The general principle of muscle is that if it is overstretched it will tend to go into spasm. So sometimes if a patient has spent the day doing a lot of activity they may be more prone to night cramps during the evening.

For most people, night cramps are an irregular occurring problem but there are some, especially older individuals who are more prone to regular bouts.



Dr. Eric Ricefield • Dr. Mark Yagodich • Dr. Jason Hearn  
39 Rittenhouse Place • Ardmore, PA 19003 • (610) 642-8837  
1410 Russell Road, Suite 201 • Paoli, PA 19301 • (610) 644-6501

There are some conditions which may cause muscle cramping:

- Some medicines can cause cramps as a side-effect.
- Dehydration
- Conditions that cause alterations in the balance of salts in the bloodstream (such as high or low sodium or potassium level).
- Some people who have renal (kidney) dialysis get leg cramps
- Pregnancy- Usually in the later stages
- An untreated under active thyroid gland
- Peripheral vascular disease (narrowing of the leg arteries which causes poor circulation.
- Cirrhosis of the liver is a rare cause
- Lead poisoning
- Sarcoidosis
- Rare disorders of nerves
- Excess alcohol

There are many simple treatments for night cramps, some work better than others, so experimentation may be necessary. Be sure to mention this to Drs. Ricefield, Yagodich and Hearn so they may assist you.

For those patients who wish to try **home remedies** here are two for you.

- ◆ Put a piece of silverware such as a spoon right on the cramp. The spoon does not have to be sterling; stainless steel is fine.
- ◆ Pinch your philtrum, which is the area between your nose and upper lip, until the cramp is gone, which should take no more than a few seconds.