

Growing Pains in Children

signs of
GROWING PAINS
in children



Growing pains are most common in children aged 3-12.



Pain occurs late in the day or at night; it may awaken the child from sleep.



It often occurs after lots of physical activity.



Pain is often in the lower legs, on the front of the thigh, or occasionally in the lower arms.

What Are Growing Pains?

Growing pains are a **common and harmless cause of leg pain** in children. They typically happen in the **evening or at night**, often waking a child from sleep. Despite the name, they are **not caused by growth** but by increased activity and sensitive muscles.

Growing pains **do not cause long-term problems** and usually improve as the child gets older.

Who Gets Growing Pains?

- Most common in **children aged 3–12 years**
- Often occur after active days (running, jumping, sports)
- May run in families
- Happen in both boys and girls

Typical Symptoms

Children with growing pains may experience:

- **Aching or throbbing pain** in the legs
- Pain usually in **both legs** (thighs, calves, or behind the knees)
- Pain occurs **late afternoon, evening, or during the night**
- Child is **well during the day**
- Pain episodes last from minutes to hours
- No limp, no fever, and no swelling Growing pains **do not** affect the joints.

Causes

The exact cause is unclear, but contributing factors may include:

- Muscle fatigue after activity
- Overuse of leg muscles
- Lower pain threshold in some children

Diagnosis

Growing pains are diagnosed based on the **child's symptoms** and a **normal physical examination**.

No tests or scans are usually needed unless the symptoms are unusual.

How to Help Your Child

Most children improve with simple measures at home:

✓ **Gentle massage**

Rub the painful area for a few minutes.

✓ **Warmth**

A warm bath or a heat pack (not too hot) can soothe muscles.

✓ **Pain relief**

Paracetamol or ibuprofen can help if pain is significant (use correct dose for age/weight).

✓ **Stretching**

Gentle calf and thigh stretches before bedtime, especially after a busy day.

✓ **Reassurance**

Explain that growing pains are **common, not serious, and will get better**.



When to Seek Medical Advice See a

doctor if your child has:

- Pain in **one leg only**
- Pain that occurs **in the morning**
- **Joint swelling, redness, or warmth**
- **Limping** or difficulty walking
- **Fever**, rash, weight loss, or feeling generally unwell
- Persistent or worsening pain
- Unusual symptoms that do not fit typical growing pains

These may indicate another condition that needs medical assessment.

Prognosis

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- Growing pains are **harmless**
 - Episodes may come and go
 - Most children **outgrow the pains** by early teens
 - No long-term effects on growth, joints, or movement