

## Calf pain in children

### A parent's guide

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## What is it?

Myositis is the medical term for muscle inflammation. In myositis, inflammation damages the fibres of a muscle. This causes muscles to be weak by interfering with the ability of the muscles to contract.

Young children with a condition known as benign acute childhood myositis suddenly develop severe leg pain and cannot walk normally. These symptoms are dramatic and frightening, but they usually disappear within a few days.

Benign acute childhood myositis usually occurs in children who are recovering from flu or some other respiratory infection caused by a virus.

Doctors are not sure whether the child's muscle symptoms are caused by the virus itself or by the body's immune reaction to the virus.

## Symptoms

- Sudden trouble walking
- Severe leg pain, often worst in the calf muscles
- In most cases, the child also has a history of recent fever, runny nose and other upper respiratory tract symptoms

## Diagnosis

Your doctor will ask your child to describe their symptoms. It is especially important to describe the exact location of any weakness or pain and how long it has been present.

Next, your doctor will examine your child, paying special attention to muscles and nerves.

Blood tests to measure levels of muscle enzymes may also be done.

## Treatment

Medication can be given for pain. No other treatment is necessary because the illness usually gets much better within a few days.

## When to call a doctor

- If your child has muscle weakness or pain that does not go away
- A rash that does not go away
- A lump in any muscle

## Call a doctor immediately

- If your child has a fever with muscle pain and weakness
- Hot, swollen and stiff muscle
- Severe leg pain with trouble walking

## Outcome

Children typically walk normally again within a few days.