

## Growing Pains

'Growing pains' are leg cramps or aches that occur most often in the late afternoon/evening or at night, and will often wake the child from sleep. The pains are usually one sided, dull and non-specific, and located deep within either the thigh, knee or calf. The pains are intermittent and do not occur every night, but seem to be more likely to occur after a day of increased activity.



*A South Australian study published in the August 2004 issue of the Journal of Paediatrics found that approximately 36.9% of children 4–6 years of age experienced growing pains and that limb pain was a presenting complaint in 7% of paediatrician visits.*

Though several studies have been conducted, the actual cause of growing pains still remains unclear.

### Chiropractic Management

Altered biomechanics and spinal misalignment, especially in the lower lumbar spine and pelvis, may create imbalances in the quadriceps, hamstring, and calf muscles, which may contribute to leg pain. This can lead to asymmetrical forces through the child's pelvis and lower limbs, with a resultant uneven distribution of weight, placing additional stress and strain not only on the child's spine, but also the feet, ankles, and knees. This may in turn lead to the symptoms associated with growing pains.

### Other options:

#### Vitamin D

A vitamin D supplement may make a difference with growing pains.

*In a 2015 study, researchers found that only 6% of children who suffered from growing pains had adequate levels of vitamin D.<sup>1</sup> A subsequent study examined this relationship by supplementing thirty-three children affected by growing pains with vitamin D for three months. In eight children the pain resolved completely, while others experienced a significant reduction in symptoms.<sup>2</sup>*

One theory behind why vitamin D might help is that inadequate vitamin D leads to low bone density, which places 'abnormal pressure on sensory nerves of the bone.'<sup>2</sup>

## Bone Broth

Bone broth\* has been shown to help with growing pains.

*A 1944 study<sup>3</sup> (that is not a misprint) found that bone meal, combined with vitamins A and D completely relieved the symptoms of all 112 children in the study group who had been diagnosed with growing pains or who kicked and screamed at night.*

Bone broth is similar to bone meal in that it contains highly bioavailable forms of calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium and other minerals.

(\*The web has many different versions of bone broth recipes, from broths that take 6 days to make, to overnight recipes).

## Vitamin B6

According to some studies, growing pains may sometimes be a result of vitamin B6 deficiency.<sup>4</sup> Foods to encourage therefore in a child with growing pains include those that are naturally high in B6:

- Tuna
- Turkey
- Beef
- Chicken
- Salmon
- Sweet potatoes
- Sunflower seeds
- Spinach
- Banana.

## Gluten

There are reports on the resolution of growing pains in children when gluten was removed from the child's diet. This also may be an avenue worth exploring.

1. J Coll Physicians Surg Pak. 2011 May;21(5):284-7. doi: 05.2011/JCPSP.284287. Vitamin D levels in children with growing pains.Qamar S1, Akbani S, Shamim S, Khan G
2. J Bone Miner Metab. 2015 Mar;33(2):201-6. doi: 10.1007/s00774-014-0579-5. Epub 2014 Mar 15. Significant association among growing pains, vitamin D supplementation, and bone mineral status: results from a pilot cohort study.Morandi G1, Maines E, Piona C, Monti E, Sandri M, Gaudino R, Boner A, Antoniazzi F.Martin EM.
3. Report on the clinical use of bone meal. Can Med Assoc J 50:562, 1944.
4. Wise Traditions in Food, Farming and the Healing Arts, the quarterly journal of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Winter 2008.