

GROWING PAINS

SYMPTOMS

- Muscular in nature.
- Usually affecting the legs more than the arms.
- Usually affects both sides at the same time (eg. both legs)
- Symptoms commonly at the front of the thighs, behind the knees and the calves.
- Usually worse in the afternoon/evening and may wake a child during sleep.
- Symptoms gone by morning.
- Symptoms don't occur every day and will come and go.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

- Diagnose growing pains and rule out other issues.
- Pain management advice.
- Exercises to settle pains.
- Exercises to stretch tight muscles and strengthen weaker muscles.
- Information for the child and family.
- Referral to colleagues for specialist assessment or equipment.

WHAT ARE THEY?

- Often described as aching or throbbing pains a child experiences throughout childhood and adolescence.
- They DO NOT cause long term problems.
- They DO NOT affect how a child walks or runs.
- They DO NOT make a child unwell.
- They DO NOT affect growth or adulthood.

WHO DO THEY AFFECT?

- Usually children aged 3-8 years.
- Can affect children during early adolescents.
- Can affect children when they experience a growth spurt.

WHY DOES IT AFFECT THEM?

- The exact reason is yet to be fully established.
- Suggested to be an imbalance between the rate of growth of the bones and the soft tissue (eg. muscles, ligaments)
- Can be exacerbated by overuse during the day, from activities such as running, jumping, and climbing, which are tough on the child's body.
- Flat feet and low levels of vitamin D have also been suggested.

SPECIFIC TREATMENT

- Massage
- Heat packs
- Physical activity
- Taping
- Foot orthoses (shoe inserts)
- Over the counter pain medication (NOT aspirin)

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

- Swelling
- Stiffness after waking.
- Not pain free in a morning.
- Redness
- Child walking with a limp.
- Pain that starts to interfere with daily activities.