



## Management for Muscle Cramps

Your son/daughter has sustained a muscle cramp. A muscle cramp is an involuntary and forcibly contracted muscle that does not relax. Muscle cramps can involve part or all of a muscle, or several muscles in a group.

Muscle cramps range in intensity from a slight tic to agonizing pain, and can last a few seconds to 15 minutes or longer. A cramp might recur multiple times before it goes away completely. Self-care tips for cramps include:

- Stopping activities that triggered the cramp.
- Gently stretching and massaging of the cramping muscle; holding it in stretched position until the cramp stops.
- Application of cold packs or ice to the affected muscle(s).
- Doing regular flexibility exercises before and after physical activity to stretch muscle groups most prone to cramping.
- Re-hydrating the body with water or sports drinks.
- Stay away from carbonated drinks.

For some, spasms may awaken them in the night following an intense cramp, and may cause soreness in the muscle for the next 24 – 48 hours. To prevent cramps, you should keep your body adequately hydrated. Athletes often times do not drink enough liquids to replenish fluid lost during exercise. To help prevent cramps:

- Hydrate appropriately with water or sports drinks a few hours before participating in physical activity. Avoid drinks high in caffeine or sugar.
- Drink water at regular intervals, before you get thirsty.

See your doctor if cramps are severe, happen frequently, or respond poorly to simple treatments.

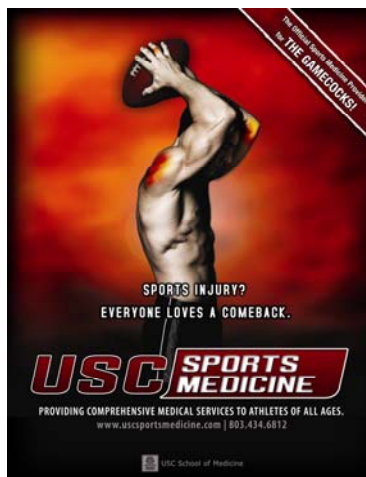
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### **USC SPORTS MEDICINE CENTER**

**TWO MEDICAL PARK,  
LL Suite L10**

(803) 434-7121

(803) 434-7306 (f)



**Jeffrey Guy, M.D.**  
Orthopedic Surgery

**Christopher Mazoue, M.D.**  
Orthopedic Surgery

**Jason Stacy, M.D.**  
Sports Medicine

**Ramon Ylanan, M.D.**  
Sports Medicine

**Brian Keisler, M.D.**  
Sports Medicine

**Kevin Herod, MS, ATC, SCAT**  
Athletic Training Coordinator

**Chris Emrick, ATC, SCAT**  
Athletic Trainer

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803-434-7121

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