

MG & Muscle Cramps

The following document was prepared by the Myasthenia Gravis Association.

Muscle cramps seem to be a common problem among MG patients. Muscles require calcium, potassium and sodium to work properly. For relief of muscle cramps, try the following: (remember to always talk to your doctor before trying these remedies)

Calcium

Dictum dicalcium phosphate tablets crushed between your teeth before swallowing usually works in 10 to 15 minutes. Tums also helps prevent cramps. It is absorbed much slower, but is useful as a preventative. It is also a very good antacid and does not contain Magnesium (which those living with MG should avoid).

Potassium

As important as it is to have adequate potassium, too much can also cause muscle cramps. That is why most potassium tablets, capsules and liquids require a prescription. Because potassium can irritate the stomach, it is better to get this mineral from potassium rich foods.

Salt

An MG patient shouldn't go on a low salt diet unless specifically recommended by his/her doctor. Those living with MG who are certain they do not have high blood pressure, can usually relieve muscle cramps by eating a salty snack.

Anytime you have a blood test drawn, ask your doctor to show you your levels of calcium, potassium and sodium and see if they are in the normal range. Do not use over-the-counter preparations for muscle cramps as they contain quinine which can cause myasthenic muscles to stop working. The best way to avoid muscle cramps is to keep your body moving and keep your muscles in good condition.