

Shin Splints (Tibialis Anterior or Posterior Tendinitis)

What are shin splints?

Shin splints are an irritation of the lower leg muscles. Most often the pain is felt along the edge of the large bone of the lower leg called the tibia. They are caused by repeated impact activities on the legs such as running and jumping. Poor foot alignment or increased exercise may also cause shin splints.

What are the symptoms?

- Tenderness to touch along the bone.
- Pain when running.
- Pain in the leg when moving the ankle against resistance (pushing).

How is it diagnosed?

Shin splints are diagnosed by the location of the pain and other symptoms. Your healthcare provider may also ask about your activities.

How is it treated?

Pain medicine, decreased running and jumping, resting and icing the shin may help with pain and swelling. Other treatments may include:

- Icing. Use a bag of crushed ice, or frozen peas or corn. You can reuse these items as an ice pack. **Do not eat** the corn or peas once they have been used as an ice pack.
 - Put a towel between skin and bag. If you put the ice pack directly on the skin, it may cause frost bite. Put the bag on the sore area.
 - Leave on for 15 to 20 minutes.
- An elastic bandage such as an Ace® wrap. This puts pressure (compression) on the ankle to help decrease swelling.
- Exercises to stretch and strengthen the ankles, knees and hips may be needed. Regular therapy helps you learn an exercise routine. This will help you get back to regular activities.
- Orthotics and arch supports may help keep correct foot alignment.
- X-rays or an MRI may be needed to see if a broken bone is causing the pain.

ALERT: Call your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if you have special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.

