

Shin Splints (Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome)



Overview

This is pain you feel in the front of one or both of your lower legs. It can be a problem for runners, dancers, gymnasts and other active people.

Causes

Shin splints is an overuse problem. It can develop when you increase your activity level or change your activity routine. Running on hard surfaces is a common culprit. Repetitive, high-impact leg activities can damage the muscles, tendons and bones of your lower legs. The connective tissue that holds muscle to bone can stretch and tear. This causes inflammation and pain. Shoes are worn out or that don't fit properly can increase your likelihood of getting shin splints.

Symptoms

If you have this condition, you may feel sharp or dull pain in one or both legs. This pain gets worse with exercise and better with rest. If your shin splints are severe, your legs may hurt even when you aren't active.

Treatment

Shin splints heal on their own with proper rest. You can help your shin splints heal by avoiding high-impact activities and by icing your legs. Physical therapy and orthotics may also help. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that is right for you.