



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS Veterans Health Administration

Date

Dear Veteran,

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently sent out a strong warning, stating again that quinine should NOT be used for treating leg cramps. The reason is because quinine may cause serious side effects. These side effects rarely occur but include bleeding, allergies, heart trouble or even death. Unfortunately, no one can predict who might develop these serious side effects. Also, side effects may occur at any time, even if someone has been taking quinine without previous problems. Because of these issues, the Department of Veterans Affairs will no longer provide quinine for leg cramps.

At this time, there are no medication alternatives to replace your quinine. However, here are some suggestions that you may find helpful:

1. Loosen up the covers/blankets over the feet at night. This helps your calf muscles to stay relaxed.
2. Try stretching your calf muscles several times a day:
  - a. Stand about two to three feet in front of a wall.
  - b. Put your hands on the wall.
  - c. Gently lean forward without taking your heels off the ground.
  - d. Hold for 10-30 seconds.
3. If a leg cramp does occur while lying in bed, stretch the muscle. To do that, try to straighten your legs and flex your feet towards your knees. Or, it may be helpful to sit up, hold your toes and pull them towards your knees while keeping your legs straight. You can bend your knees if needed. Or, you can try massaging the muscle during the cramp to help it relax.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your VA Provider or Pharmacist (Include appropriate phone number(s) here).

Sincerely,