
RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME (RLS) rev 11JUN07

Most Important Symptoms of RLS:

1. An urge to move your legs, with unpleasant or creepy-crawly sensations deep in your legs.
2. The sensations and urge to move tend to occur during periods of rest or inactivity.
3. The symptoms are reduced or relieved by voluntary movement of your legs.
4. Symptoms bother you more in the evening and at night, especially when you lie down.
5. Associated symptoms often include difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, jerking your legs when you are asleep, and poor daytime alertness.

RLS: General Information

- Up to 8% of the U.S. population may have this condition.
- The cause is unknown, but research is ongoing.
- RLS often runs in families.
- RLS is rarely caused by another condition, such as anemia or low levels of iron in the blood. This is called secondary RLS.
- If you have no family history of RLS and no underlying or associated conditions causing it, your RLS is said to be idiopathic, meaning without a known cause.
- Many individuals with RLS can trace their symptoms back to childhood. These symptoms may have been called “growing pains”, or the children may have been thought to be hyperactive because they had difficulty sitting quietly.
- Many people who have RLS while awake also have periodic limb movements (PLMs) while asleep. The bed partner may notice frequent leg jerks, twists, or jumps in sleep.

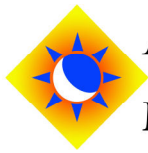
RLS: Diagnosis

We diagnose RLS by listening to your description of the sensations. There is no laboratory test to confirm the diagnosis of RLS.

RLS: Treatment

1. Some medications seem to worsen the symptoms of RLS. These include calcium-channel blockers (used to treat high blood pressure and heart conditions), most anti-nausea medications, some cold and allergy medications, major tranquilizers, and most medications used to treat depression.
2. We recommend that people with RLS avoid all caffeine-containing products, including chocolate and caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea, and some soft drinks.
3. Medicines: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the drugs Mirapex and Requip to treat RLS, and others will be approved in the future. Several drugs approved for other conditions have also been found in clinical studies to be helpful. These medications fall into four main classes – dopaminergic agents; most often prescribed for Parkinson’s Disease, sedatives, pain relievers, and anti-seizure medications. Each drug or class of drugs has its own benefits, limitations, and possible side-effects.

For further information: The Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation at www.RLS.org



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