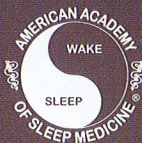


RESTLESS LEGS *syndrome*

CONSEQUENCES ITCH
DISORDER BURNING LEGS
SLEEP DISORDER
UNCOMFORTABLE
DIABETES AWAKE
TREATMENT MEDICATIONS TIRED
WOMEN FAMILY LIFESTYLE
EXERCISE MASSAGE
CAFFEINE REDUCE
TCHING MASSAGE URGE TO
PREGNANCY LIFESTYLE
LEGS TREATMENT SLEEP



The American Academy
of Sleep Medicine
www.sleepeducation.org

WHAT IS *RLS?*

I can't fall asleep because I feel like I have to move my legs.

I wake up at night because I feel like my legs are on fire.

When I try to go to sleep, I feel an itching in my legs. It goes away if I walk around, but if I lie down, it comes back.

If you have said any of the above statements, you may have Restless Legs Syndrome, or RLS.

Many people wait years to seek treatment and wish they would have talked to a health care provider earlier.

LEARN ABOUT RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME

Restless Legs Syndrome, or RLS, happens when you feel an overwhelming urge to move your legs. You may also feel burning or itching inside your legs. These uncomfortable feelings may stop for a short time if you walk around. Usually, the feelings are worse at night than in the morning. Some people only have symptoms at night.



For more information, visit www.sleepeducation.org

WHAT CAUSES RLS?

RLS can be caused by or be made worse by other health issues or medication.

LOW IRON LEVELS: Low iron levels can cause problems with brain cell communication that can lead to RLS. If you think your RLS is caused by low iron, do not take supplements on your own. Instead, talk with your health care provider.

DIABETES: Diabetes can damage blood vessels and nerves that affect leg muscles, causing RLS. Making sure that your diabetes is well treated may help prevent or improve your RLS.

PREGNANCY: Many women have RLS during their pregnancy. It usually goes away within a month of giving birth.

MEDICATIONS: Medications that may cause RLS or make it worse include:

- Allergy medications
- Some antidepressants
- Over-the-counter sleep aids
- Anti-nausea medications

WHO IS AT RISK FOR RLS?

WOMEN: Women are up to twice as likely than men to have RLS.

PEOPLE OVER AGE 45: Most people develop RLS after age 45.

FAMILY MEMBERS WITH RLS: If you have a family member with RLS, you are more likely to develop RLS before you are 45 years old.

Often, the causes of RLS are unknown.



For more information, visit www.sleepeducation.org

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE RLS?

Your health care provider will ask you about your medical history. He or she can refer you to a sleep specialist if necessary. Talk to your health care provider if you think you have RLS. A sleep study can help rule out other sleep disorders and also help diagnose RLS by showing leg muscle activity throughout the night.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNTREATED RLS?

If left untreated, you may notice that your RLS symptoms become more frequent and severe over months or years. Sometimes people with RLS have trouble sitting still for long periods of time. They might have problems on a long car or plane ride.

People with RLS often get fewer hours of sleep than they need or have poor quality sleep. There are many problems that can occur if you do not get enough sleep on a regular basis.

HOW IS RLS TREATED?

RLS can be improved by changes in behavior or treated with medication.

Behavioral changes to help RLS:

- Exercising
- Reducing stress
- Drinking less caffeine
- Not drinking alcohol
- Quitting smoking
- Massaging your legs

There are many medications available to treat RLS. People may take one medication or a combination to treat their disorder. RLS drugs may improve your symptoms for a period of time but then stop working as well as they once did. It is important to stay in contact with your health care provider if you have problems with your medication.

Talk with your health care provider if you think you may have RLS.