

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME

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What Is Restless Legs Syndrome?

Restless legs syndrome, or RLS, is a condition that causes uncomfortable feelings in the legs. RLS can also cause urges to move the legs that you can't control. These feelings and urges usually get worse during periods of rest. RLS symptoms can make it very hard to sleep. What causes RLS is as yet unknown, but other health conditions could make it more likely, including:

- Chronic kidney disease
- Low iron levels
- Pregnancy

Sometimes certain medicines may make symptoms worse. These include:

- Medicine for depression and other mental problems
- Medicines for nausea
- Certain cold and allergy medicines

What Are the Warning Signs?

Most symptoms of RLS are worse at night or while you are at rest, but can sometimes be felt during the day. These symptoms may include:

- An urge to move your legs that you cannot control
- Uncomfortable feelings in the legs
- Leg pain
- Leg jerks
- Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Feeling tired during the day

How Is It Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask questions about your symptoms, your family history, and any medicines you take and will examine you. He or she may also order blood tests to rule out other reasons for your symptoms.

How Is It Treated?

Because the cause of RLS is unknown, finding the right treatment can take time. Some treatment options are:

- Changing medicines that might be making your symptoms worse
- Lifestyle changes like forming good sleep habits, exercising regularly, and stretching before bed



- Massaging your legs, taking a hot bath, or using a heating pad or ice pack.

There are some medicines that are helpful in the treatment of RLS. Ask your doctor about the treatment option that's right for you.

Questions for My Doctor

- What is causing my symptoms?
- Which medicines will be best for me?
- Could RLS cause long-term damage?
- Could my symptoms go away by themselves?
- How can I form good sleep habits?
- I can't concentrate because of my RLS—what can I do?

Bottom Line

- RLS is a condition that causes uncomfortable feelings in your legs. It can also cause an urge to move your legs that you can't control. These feelings and urges are worse while you are at rest or during the night.
- Other symptoms of RLS can include leg pain, leg jerks, trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, and feeling tired during the day.
- To diagnose RLS, your doctor will ask about your medical history and examine you. Blood tests may be needed to rule out other conditions.
- There are several ways to manage your symptoms, including lifestyle changes, medicines, and other treatment options.

For More Information



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Medline Plus

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/restlesslegs.html>

Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation

www.rls.org/about-rls