



Do You Have Restless Legs?

Do you often feel an urge to move your legs while sitting or lying in bed? Are you ever annoyed by a creeping or itching feeling in your legs? This can keep you from sleeping at night. You may then feel tired during the day. If you have these problems, talk to your healthcare provider. He or she can suggest a treatment plan and help you find ways to sleep better.

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)

RLS is a creeping, crawly, or jumpy feeling in the legs or sometimes the arms. Symptoms of RLS often occur when you sit or lie down at night. This discomfort can keep you from falling asleep. RLS is more common in older people and tends to run in families. Overuse of caffeine or alcohol may make symptoms worse. Iron deficiency, diabetes, or kidney problems can contribute to RLS. People with RLS also often have PLMS symptoms.

Periodic Limb Movement Syndrome (PLMS)

PLMS is a sudden leg jerking during sleep. The person you sleep with is often the one who notices it. Your legs may jerk many times during the night. You and your partner may both have trouble sleeping and feel tired in the morning. PLMS shouldn't be confused with the normal leg or body twitching many people have when first falling asleep.



"Before I fall asleep, I have a creepy, crawly feeling in my legs."



"Me too. And my husband tells me I jerk my legs all night when I'm sleeping."

Good Sleep Habits

Even though you have RLS, you can still have restful sleep. Try these good sleeping habits:

- ◆ Keep a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.
- ◆ Avoid or limit naps.
- ◆ Create a comfortable setting for sleep. Make sure the room is quiet, dark, and not too hot or too cold.
- ◆ Use your bed only for sleep and sex.
- ◆ Avoid or limit caffeine and nicotine. They can keep you awake at night. Also avoid alcohol. It may help you fall asleep at first, but your sleep will not be restful.



If Medications Are Needed

Your healthcare provider may prescribe medication to reduce your symptoms and help you sleep better. Some medications relieve pain. Others help relax muscles. If you have an iron deficiency, a supplement may be needed.

Healthy Lifestyle

Your lifestyle affects your health and your sleep. Here are some healthy habits:

- ◆ Eat a balanced diet. To get enough vitamins and minerals, you may also need to take supplements.
- ◆ Manage stress and learn ways to relax. Deep breathing techniques and visualization can help to relax your muscles and calm your mind.
- ◆ Exercise regularly. It can help reduce stress. Also, you will have more energy during the day and be more tired at bedtime. Afternoon exercise is best. Nighttime exercise may affect your sleep.





What You Can Do

Symptoms of RLS and PLMS can be treated. Together, you and your healthcare provider can work on your treatment plan. If needed, medications may be prescribed. Also learn what you can do to ease your discomfort. Good sleep habits and a healthy lifestyle will help you rest better at night and have more energy during the day.

Working with Your Healthcare Provider

Discuss your sleep problems with your healthcare provider. Be prepared to answer questions about your medical and family history. A lab test may be done to check the iron level in your blood. Low iron may cause some RLS symptoms. Your healthcare provider may suggest you have a sleep study to help diagnose PLMS. Then your treatment plan can be discussed.

Tips for Temporary Relief

To reduce your discomfort, try the following:

- ◆ Walking or stretching
- ◆ Rubbing your legs
- ◆ Having a massage
- ◆ Doing activities that make muscles in your hands or legs work
- ◆ Relaxing with yoga or meditation
- ◆ Taking a hot or cold bath

