
History of the Sleep Disorder

Restless Legs Syndrome was first described as a disease in 1945 by Swedish neurologist Karl-Axel Ekbom. His doctoral thesis, "Restless Legs," described a condition that is characterized by an uncontrollable urge to move one's body to halt uncomfortable or painful sensations in the legs.

Who is at risk?

Studies have shown that everyone is at risk for the disease. People of all ages, sexes, and races have been diagnosed with RLS. The likelihood of having the disease, however, is greater as one gets older. There is also some evidence suggesting that women are slightly more prone to contracting the disease than men. Overall, at least 12 million Americans suffer from the disease.



Who to contact?

While RLS is a chronic disease that has no cure, its symptoms can be kept under control with the proper treatment. If you think you know someone who suffers from the disease there are a number of resources at your disposal. You should get help immediately! Don't let the disease ruin your life.

Consult a physician. While your doctor is probably not an expert on the disorder, they will either be able to help diagnose the disease, or at least refer you to someone who can.

The Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation:

Email: Rlsfoundation@rls.org

Web: www.rls.org

Phone number: (507)-287-6465



The National Sleep Foundation:

Email: nsl@sleepfoundation.org

Web: www.sleepfoundation.org

Phone number: (202)-347-3471



Sleep better
at night!
Live better
during the
day!

Restless Legs Syndrome

(aka "the jimmylegs," "the kicks," or "Wittmaack-Ekbom Syndrome")



Everything you need to know and more about a sleep disorder that plagues millions of Americans! You could be a victim of RLS and not even know it!





OUCH!
GET THEM
OFF ME!

Symptoms of RLS

- The unpleasant sensation/urge in one's legs to move them when at rest (burning, creeping, tugging, tickling, itching, insects crawling are all descriptions of the feeling)
- Trying to relax worsens symptoms
- Worsening symptoms at night
- Periodic Limb Movement Disorder (PLMD), the involuntary leg twitching or jerking every 10 to 60 seconds while sleeping occurs in about 80% of RLS patients

Other Symptoms that could indicate RLS

- Excessive daytime fatigue and sleepiness
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Impaired memory/ memory loss

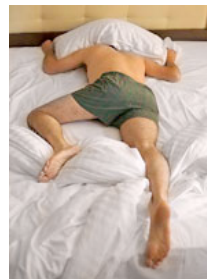
Associated Conditions

(RLS may indicate existence of one of these illnesses)

- Low iron levels or anemia
- Chronic diseases (e.g. kidney failure, diabetes, Parkinsons)
- Pregnancy in females
- Certain medications have been known to aggravate the symptoms of RLS

Diagnosis of RLS

- Diagnosis of RLS relies mainly on a patient's description of the symptoms. In some cases, polysomnography has been utilized to indicate the existence of PLMD in RLS patients. Additionally, a full and accurate family history is a necessary step in a correct diagnosis. Recent studies have shown a high likelihood of a hereditary aspect of the disease. If there is a history of the disease in the family, one may be predisposed to the illness.



Don't be like
this guy! Get
help!

What are the non-medical treatments for the disorder?

- Reduction in the intake of substances like caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco has had some success in alleviating the symptoms of RLS.
- The ability to maintain a more normal sleep pattern has proven to help some patients.
- Moderate exercise has helped some patients, though too much exercise can very likely aggravate the symptoms.
- hot baths, massages, heat pads, and ice packs have all minimized symptoms for some patients

Medical Treatments

- If an underlying condition exists, treatment for that condition is undertaken (e.g. iron supplements for anemia patients)
- Medications include dopaminergics, benzodiazepines, opioids and anticonvulsants
- In 2005, ropinirole became the only drug approved by the FDA specifically for the treatment of RLS