



Waukesha County's Neurology & Sleep Solutions

262-522-3070

Pewaukee, Mukwonago & Delafield



Sleep Education - Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is a condition in which sufferers feel a creepy, crawling, jittery, or jumping sensation in the legs. This sensation is often accompanied by an urge to move the legs. Sometimes it's described as an aching, tingling sensation deep within the legs. Up to 10% of the American population is affected by mild, moderate, or severe RLS. It's slightly more common in women. The severity of the condition increases with age.

Symptoms usually occur during periods of inactivity, commonly present in the evening or at night. RLS can affect sleep patterns since the symptoms may keep sufferers awake during the night. RLS tends to run in families and is more common in the elderly. Overuse of caffeine or alcohol may make symptoms worse. Iron deficiency, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, peripheral neuropathy, and kidney disease can contribute to RLS. Diagnosis for RLS is done by a thorough medical and family history intake, as well as lab screening for vitamin and mineral deficiencies, especially Vitamin B12 and Iron.

About 80% of RLS patients also suffer from Periodic Limb Movement Syndrome or PLMS, which is a condition characterized by sudden leg jerking (usually occurring repeatedly every 10-40 seconds) during sleep. These leg movements may awaken the patient and cause disturbed sleep.



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Treating RLS Symptoms

Medications may be prescribed by your healthcare provider. Certain lifestyle adjustments may be beneficial in treating your symptoms:

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Be sure you're getting the proper vitamins and minerals. Talk with your doctor about the possibility of taking supplements.
- Learn how to manage your stress level. Try different techniques that work for you.
- Exercise regularly.
- Follow guidelines for proper sleep hygiene.

Be advised that some medications, including over the counter or herbal medications, may worsen your RLS. Talk to your doctor if you're concerned about any of the medications you're taking.

For immediate relief from RLS symptoms, try different techniques to reduce your discomfort:

- Walking or stretching
- Massaging sore muscles
- Taking a hot or cold bath
- Actively using the muscles in your legs
- Yoga, meditation or other relaxation techniques

References: [National Sleep Foundation](#) | [RLS Foundation](#) | [Help Guide - RLS](#)

Phone: 262-522-3070 | Fax: 262-522-3071



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Dr. Sean A. Jochims offers care in sleep medicine, sleep disorders, sleep apnea, CPAP machines, CPAP masks, CPAP supplies, EMG and EEG testing, spine disease (including neck / back pain and radiculopathy), muscle / nerve disease, nerve conduction studies (including carpal tunnel syndrome and neuropathies), headaches, epilepsy and movement disorders (including Parkinson's disease, tremors and Botox treatment).