

RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME

Symptoms and Solutions





Creepy-crawly, tingly, itchy, achy legs are an everyday, or more often, an every night occurrence for people who have restless leg syndrome (RLS). The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke estimates that 12 million people in the United States have restless leg syndrome, but it is likely that many people who have the condition go undiagnosed. Some studies estimate 10-15% of the population suffers from RLS. Even more significant is the negative impact it has on sleep and your health in general. That's why the pursuit of a diagnosis and effective treatment plan is such an important priority for sufferers. If you are frustrated with RLS and want to see if vein treatments can bring you relief, the only way to do this is to schedule a specialized vein reflux ultrasound and evaluation by a vein specialist.

In my experience as a vein specialist over the past 16 years, I have treated patients on a daily basis who suffer from RLS and its effects. Over the years, I and other vein specialists have noted a correlation between restless leg syndrome and vein reflux. The symptoms and patterns match. In the majority of my patients who suffer from RLS, and who also are found to have a vein condition, their symptoms significantly improve or disappear completely with treatment.

It's more than a passing coincidence. In this ebook, I will discuss the correlation that I see between vein reflux and RLS and how vein treatments can help. I'll also discuss the treatments and talk about the benefit derived in alleviating the symptoms. One patient in particular said that, after treatment for his vein condition, his RLS symptoms went away and he was able to sleep through the night for the first time in 25 years. Before that he got at most 4 hours of sleep, and he felt tortured by it.

Most patients I see are frustrated by their restless leg symptoms and lack of relief with conventional medical therapy. Most primary care providers, including neurologists, have not yet been exposed to the growing awareness amongst vein care practitioners that there is a vein source for many patients with RLS, and treatments do help. My goal is to share what I've learned in more than 15 years treating vein conditions and over 10 years as a cardiac and vascular surgeon. I also suffered from a vein condition and restless legs and know first hand how debilitating symptoms can be and how exhilarating it is when symptoms go away after treatment. For these reasons, I am excited to share what I have learned and offer hope to those who suffer from RLS.

ARE YOU SUFFERING UNNECESSARILY FROM RLS?

Here are some stories from reporter Tara Parker Pope after she first heard the term "restless leg syndrome." Here are a few of the patient stories recorded by Pope and a colleague:

Marge is a retired teacher. She is also a poet. She writes many of her poems at two in the morning when restless leg syndrome won't let her sleep. Marge says that she can't remember a time when she didn't have restless leg syndrome. When she first learned about restless leg syndrome 35 years ago, she said, "I knew I wasn't crazy," and she was not alone.

Joseph was in great shape when he first noticed the symptoms of restless leg syndrome. He was regularly running marathons. But after long runs he started noticing that his legs didn't feel right. Tingly sensations in his legs kept him up at night. When he finally went to a sleep center for a diagnosis, he was diagnosed with restless leg syndrome and put on medication – that didn't work.

Accountant Kathryn developed creepy-crawly sensations in her leg when she was six months pregnant. (It's not unusual for restless leg syndromes to first appear during pregnancy.) She wasn't too concerned, because her mother and her grandmother and her five aunts had the same experience, and for them, the pain and unpleasant sensations went away when they gave birth. Kathryn found relief by sitting on an exercise ball, and, when the sensations spread to her arms, doing push-ups. But she decided to avoid medications as long as possible.

If you have suffered from RLS for a long time, it's important to know that you are not alone...and that there is help. The only way for these patients, and for you, to figure out if vein treatment will help your RLS is to schedule a vein reflux ultrasound with a vein specialist.

In my practice, I treat patients weekly who have suffered from RLS for years. Here are their descriptions of life with RLS prior to treatment:

- Sensation occurred at night and she would dread falling asleep. The sensation started in her legs with the building urge to move. It felt like a buzzing electrical sensation in her body, and then it grew and extended into her body. She would have to get up and walk around. She told me it was the most unpleasant sensation she has ever had in her life.
- Another patient had to sleep in a separate room from her husband. He kicked throughout the night, forcing her to sleep in a separate room. He wasn't aware he had RLS. He also didn't feel rested in the morning when he woke up. He had vein treatment, successfully resolving his RLS. Both now sleep through the night and feel rested.
- Starting to fall asleep and describe the experience of feeling bugs crawling on your skin. (The medical term for this is 'formication' - often seen in cases of alcohol withdrawal) It's incredibly disturbing because you can't see anything and you can't relax. You reach down and try to swat them away, with no relief.

Hear one of our patients share his story here: [Jim's Story](#)



YOUR NEXT STEP

Your next step is easier than you think. We're happy to answer questions - feel free to contact us. What you will need is a specialized vein reflux ultrasound, and part of the exam is performed by standing up or at a steep angle by a qualified vascular ultrasound technician. This is followed by an interpretation of the ultrasound and an assessment of your symptoms by a vein care specialist. If you are like 80% of people with RLS AND vein reflux, you will get relief.

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