



Restless Leg Syndrome & PLMD - Sleep Disorders

Periodic limb movement disorder (PLMD) and restless leg syndrome (RLS) are distinct disorders, but often occur simultaneously. While they are one of the most common causes of insomnia, their causes are often unknown.

What are PLMD and RLS?

Both PLMD and RLS are described as

RLS is recurring uncomfortable sensations in the legs while at rest that cause an urge to walk or relieve the discomfort by stretching, bending, or rubbing the legs. The arms may also be affected, but it's much less common.

PLMD is described as frequent or involuntary muscle spasms, usually experienced during sleep. Sleep is commonly disturbed. PLMD should not be confused with normal leg or body twitching many people experience when first falling asleep.

Causes And Treatments

The cause of RLS and PLMD is unknown. Some cases are inherited and more than one family member may be affected. Other cases have been associated with nerve damage in the legs due to diabetes, kidney problems or alcoholism.

These conditions can begin at any age, but the symptoms tend to worsen over the years, and become more severe in middle-to-old age. Pregnancy or hormonal changes may temporarily worsen symptoms. Stress, diet or other environmental factors may play a role for some people. For temporary relief, try the following:

- ▶ Walk or stretch
- ▶ Rub your legs
- ▶ Get a massage
- ▶ Take part in activities that make muscles in your hands or legs work
- ▶ Relax with yoga or meditation
- ▶ Take a hot or cold bath

Treatment for RLS and PLMD at the Diagnostic Sleep Center is tailored to each individual based on medical history and a physical assessment. PLMD can be treated with medication. Your healthcare provider can develop an appropriate treatment plan based on your specific needs.

For more information, contact the Diagnostic Sleep Center of La Porte Regional Health System at (219) 326-2377 or visit www.laportehealth.org.