COULD YOUR RLS TREATMENT MAKE YOUR SYMPTOMS WORSE?

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS WITH RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME
THE IMPACT OF RLS

Approximately 7 million adults in the United States have primary Restless Legs Syndrome.

If you or a loved one suffer from primary RLS, you know that the nighttime urge to move the legs and the related discomfort can have broader effects. These broader effects can be devastating—disrupting sleep, disturbing mood, and negatively affecting everyday life.

WHAT MAKES RLS PRIMARY?

Doctors describe RLS as primary when the symptoms are not caused by another condition such as pregnancy or iron deficiency.
Primary RLS is generally considered a chronic condition—most people who have it will always have it. While there is not yet a cure for RLS, several medications have been proven to manage its symptoms.

Primary RLS symptoms tend to progress—they become worse over time for most people. In addition, RLS symptoms can be made worse with long-term use of certain treatments. This is called augmentation.
AUGMENTATION

Augmentation is a long-term side effect of certain RLS treatments. Augmentation occurs when a medication stops making RLS symptoms better and begins to make them worse. It can happen as soon as a week after starting a new treatment, but commonly occurs after using a medication for 6 months or longer.

THE RISK OF EXPERIENCING AUGMENTATION INCREASES THE LONGER CERTAIN RLS TREATMENTS ARE USED.
THE SIGNS OF AUGMENTATION

If your RLS medication has successfully controlled your symptoms, but then you notice that your symptoms:

• are worse than usual for 5 of the last 7 days,
• begin earlier in the day,
• occur sooner after rest,
• or, are spreading to another part of the body such as your arms,

you may be experiencing augmentation and should tell your doctor. Your doctor will know the best way to handle it. Do not discontinue your current treatment before talking with your doctor.
Augmentation isn’t the only long-term side effect of RLS treatment. Another long-term side effect is compulsive behavior (also called impulse control disorder). Though compulsive behaviors only affect a small percentage of people with RLS, the results can be devastating. Some of the behaviors that RLS patients have developed include uncontrollable gambling, compulsive shopping, and hypersexuality. **If you notice that you or a loved one is developing a compulsive behavior, talk with your doctor.**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

In addition to talking with your doctor, there are many organizations and websites dedicated to providing information on RLS. Here are two of the most prominent ones:

**The Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation** | www.rls.org
This non-profit organization works to increase awareness by publishing information on RLS for patients and healthcare professionals alike.

**The International Restless Legs Syndrome Study Group** | www.irlssg.org
The International Restless Legs Syndrome Study Group is an organization of healthcare professionals committed to advancing research on RLS.
REFERENCES

