RLS
Restless Legs Syndrome
A guide to the disease for healthcare professionals
The symptoms of RLS are often thought to be a temporary bother, but **primary RLS is a chronic disease**.¹,²

For many patients suffering from moderate to severe symptoms, RLS is debilitating—disrupting sleep, influencing mood, and negatively affecting everyday life.¹

**Prevalence**

As many as 12 million people in the United States may be affected by RLS.³

For these patients the disease is chronic and patients often seek treatment. In a large study, 81% of patients discussed their RLS symptoms with a physician.¹
Diagnosing RLS

RLS is typically diagnosed in a patient interview. At present, no lab tests can confirm or deny that a patient has the disease. RLS frequently runs in families, but it may also be specific to the individual or related to iron deficiency, chronic renal failure, or other conditions.

Primary Diagnostic Criteria

- Urge to move the legs
- Onset or exacerbation while resting
- Relief with movement
- Occurs or becomes worse in the evening
- Not solely accounted for by another condition (e.g., leg cramps or myalgia)

Other Symptoms

- Sleep disturbances
- Mood disturbances
- Impact on daily activities
- Periodic leg movements

RLS Treatment

There are medications approved in the United States for the treatment of RLS.

RLS is commonly misdiagnosed as poor circulation, arthritis, or a back or spinal problem.
Augmentation

Augmentation is a severe worsening of symptoms that can happen with long-term treatment. The International RLS Study Group notes that augmentation has been reported for several medications used to treat RLS. The risk of augmentation increases the longer a patient is treated. In clinical studies, the percentage of RLS patients experiencing augmentation varies based on the length of the study, the drug being tested, and other factors.

Alternative Features

- Symptom severity persists in worsening after dose increase and improving after dose decrease
- Earlier onset of symptoms by at least 4 hours or earlier onset by 2 to 4 hours along with one of the following:
  - Symptoms occur sooner after rest
  - Symptoms spread to other body parts
  - Greater symptom intensity
  - Decreased duration of relief from treatment

Basic Features

- Increase in symptom severity experienced 5 of the last 7 days
- Severity increase not accounted for by other factors such as the natural progression of the disease
- Prior positive response to treatment

Additional Information

For more information on RLS, including treatment guidelines and recommendations, see the International RLS Study Group’s report at [http://www.sleep-journal.com/article/S1389-9457(13)00211-6/fulltext](http://www.sleep-journal.com/article/S1389-9457(13)00211-6/fulltext).