

Restless Leg Syndrome During Pregnancy

Restless Leg Syndrome (also called Willis-Ekbom's disease) **affects 27% of pregnant women.** RLS usually ceases after baby is born and is more common in the third trimester. Interruption of sleep is a concern for anyone who suffers from RLS, especially a soon-to-be mother.

Symptoms of Restless Leg Syndrome

- itching, pulling, crawling, throbbing, burning, tingling, urge to move sensations
- usually in legs, but can occur in arms or other body parts
- can interrupt sleep, as it occurs primarily at night
- symptoms increase at times of rest or relaxation (i.e. going to bed or sitting down)
- symptoms decrease with movement (i.e. getting up to stretch or move)

What May Help with Restless Leg Syndrome?

Exercise

- regular yoga, walking, stretching
- movement and stretching when symptoms are first felt

Stress Relief

- relaxation - meditation, restorative yoga
- massage - focused on feet, legs and hips
- hot bath/shower before bed or at onset of symptoms
- soak in Epsom salt and warm water before bed (may just be feet or in the bath)
- orgasm - some women claim this as the cure to their RLS - it makes sense as it will activate the parasympathetic nerve system (responsible for relaxation)
- cold - soak feet in cold water or use an ice pack
- decrease stress when possible

Lifestyle

- early, regular bedtime
- elevate legs when working, reading or relaxing

Diet and Vitamins

- bananas - or other potassium rich foods
- vitamin B, magnesium, iron and folic acid **

Things That May Increase RLS symptoms

- caffeine, alcohol, tobacco
- lack of sleep or sleep routine
- anti-depressants or anti-nausea medications**
- antihistamine medications (i.e. Benadryl)**
- exercise of high intensity or too late in the day

***Note: before any making any changes to medications or vitamin supplements - check with your healthcare provider*