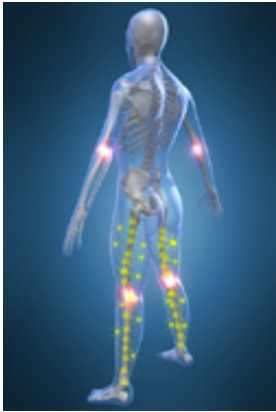


Restless Leg Syndrome Is Not An Opiate Deficiency



For me Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) is like driving down a highway at 70 miles per hour when without warning a deer darts in front of the car. To avoid the animal I instantaneously jam on the brakes, forcing the car to an abrupt stop. The deer continues on its path to safety and the vehicle comes to a standstill but inside the car I am violently being thrashed around by the follow-through forces caused by the sudden stop. With RLS the legs are at a standstill but inside there is a sensation of uncontrolled movement. And the easiest way to alleviate the feeling is to wildly move the legs.

Restless Leg Syndrome is a problem I have had since my teens. For me this ailment is very personal. Over the years it has resulted in several leg injuries caused by the violent movement of my legs, as well as an uncountable number of sleepless nights.

What the Medical World Has to Say

The medical community is a bit dumbfounded by RLS, partly because the people who suffer from it have difficulty explaining the sensations they are experiencing and partly because doctors consider the condition a minor annoyance with little reason to take it seriously.

RLS, or Ekbom's Syndrome, is considered a neurological condition which effects some segments of the population more than others. Women, the elderly and obese people appear to have a higher incidence of RLS than others. There seems to be a genetic factor as well.

Right now the medical community is of the belief that RLS is caused by a dopamine imbalance in the brain. As many know, dopamine helps to control moods or create a sense of wellbeing. What many don't know is that dopamine also plays a part in the body's ability to move. Iron is essential in the production of dopamine so more naturalistic doctors are treating RLS with iron supplements to increase dopamine production.

Other doctors are going straight for the drug cabinet. Three of the most common kinds of drugs used are Dopaminergic Agents, widely used to treat Parkinson's Disease because they regulate muscle action; Benzodiazepines that help suppress muscle action; and Opiates because of their ability to relax the person.

Personal Experience Would Beg to Differ

A few months ago I went on a doctor-directed weight loss program. At that time I was instructed to take several vitamins including iron. I was also given a list of liquids I could drink. My favorite, other than water, was bouillon which is basically a salt capsule mixed in hot water. Shortly after drinking two or three cups of bouillon a day I started experiencing RLS with a vengeance. I mean I couldn't get any sleep. I was jerking so forcefully at night I pulled both my groin muscle and threw out my knee to such an extent I couldn't walk for a few days. One day in frustration I declared to a friend I was going to research and conquer RLS, and for me I have.

It's the Salt

I'm a salt junky. Forget the sugar, pass me something salty and my palate jumps for joy. My dad, who also had RLS, was the

same. Before we ever took a bite we would ask for the salt to be passed.

Salt and sodium compounds are liberally added to the majority of food products we eat. It is even given to cattle in the form of salt licks. If you eat out or eat mostly processed foods there is no escaping sodium. Salt originally had a dual use in that it was used to preserve foods before refrigeration and was also used to mask the flavor of food beginning to spoil. Today it is used in almost every recipe, even in sweets where baking soda and baking powder both contain the sodium molecule.

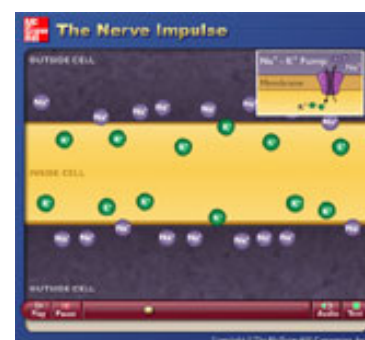
The body does need some sodium. Along with calcium, magnesium and potassium it plays an important role in muscle contractions and relaxation. However, both vegetables and meat provide enough salt to perform these tasks. Plus the sodium we get through natural sources is more readily used by our body than the mineral rock form.

The federal guideline for the daily intake of sodium is 2400 mg. This amount is too high for there is no way we can consume that much sodium without eating rock salt. The use of salt has only been around for about six thousand years. Our genetic ancestors were around for thousands of years before that. What did they do without table salt? How did they stay healthy without it? The answer is they didn't need it.

So why does the government think we should eat 2400 mgs daily? Will processed food manufacturer lobbyists please step forward? Think about it. How many cans of Bean and Bacon soup do you think would be sold if the label stated that the can's content contained 400% of the body's real daily requirement of sodium? In general most people only require about 600 mgs of sodium daily. To get a better percentage of how much sodium a product contains in relationship to what the body actually needs, take the label's percentage and multiply it by four.

[How Does Salt Toxicity Affect the Body?](#)

Sodium, calcium, magnesium and potassium are required at the cellular level for muscle movement to occur. In order to generate the energy needed for movement the Sodium-Potassium Pump moves sodium ions out of the cell, then moves potassium ions into the cell. When the Sodium-Potassium Pump gets overloaded in its effort to expel sodium from the cell it causes the whole system to become sluggish. This causes the Sodium-Calcium Pump to malfunction in its ability to manage calcium. When calcium levels within the cell rise, muscle contractions can be triggered. This contraction of a cell is called an action potential. To learn more about how the cell uses sodium to perform cellular movement watch the following McGraw Hill animations.



The simple truth is the body just can't eliminate the quantity of salt consumed by the average American. This results in several problems with only one of them being RLS. A few of the signs of sodium toxicity are fatigue, aching muscles, chapped lips, postnasal drip, dry skin and canker sores.

With this new found knowledge I got off the bouillon, stopped grabbing the salt shaker, began taking far infrared saunas to detoxify and started eating foods with less salt. Within a week I noticed my RLS was nearly eliminated. I suffered almost no RLS until one day, when I wasn't feeling well, I reached for a can of Bean and Bacon soup. I could see by the label that the two and half servings in the can contained almost 100% of my sodium requirement for the day (as per government guidelines), but what the heck, I didn't plan on eating anything else that day so I ate the entire can of soup. That evening my RLS went ballistic.

I'm not a fanatic about no-salt, I'm just cautious, and the caution has paid off. I eat few salty foods and never eat anything salty for supper. Rarely do I experience RLS. But there was still one thing that just didn't make sense to me. That being if an overload of salt is at the root of RLS why don't we experience it all the time? Why does it rear its ugly head when sitting in a movie or when trying to sleep? There has to be a trigger element to explain why RLS doesn't occur directly after polishing off a bag of potato chips.

[RLS Isn't Only About Sodium Toxicity](#)

I know I just stopped you in your tracks but hear me out. I believe excess sodium is the reason for those horrible night twitches but some electrical input has to be causing the actual nerve impulses felt with RLS. There are several large nerves running through the base of spine. Anybody who has ever had their sciatic nerve pinched knows the pain runs down the back of the leg. It doesn't hurt much at the location of the nerve compression but can make a grown person cry if the pain running down the leg continues day in and day out. Nerve stimulation is often felt at a location away from the activation point.

While sleeping the brain sends signals to the base of the spinal cord to hold back the micturition reflex, the body's desire to urinate. This doesn't stop the body from processing urine, it just numbs the desire for relief. As urine builds up in the bladder the pressure against the bladder's detrusor muscle can start a chain reaction of electrical momentum from the nerves in the pelvic area down the leg to the calf resulting in muscle contractions. Although a build up of urine is usually the culprit, gas in the intestines or even the need for a bowel movement can trigger the same muscle contractions.

The good thing is that an easy cure is available, just go to the bathroom. Go even if your bladder doesn't feel the urge. This goes for the movies, cars, airplanes and other notorious locations for RLS attacks.

To test this theory I ate extra salt for several days. When the tingle of RLS came on I went to the bathroom. Within ten minutes the desire to shake my legs had disappeared. Often I was surprised at how much I needed to urinate. A few times only a trickle was eliminated but each time it disrupted the RLS.

[Supplements](#)

In researching RLS I came across several people who had written about the help supplements gave them. The ones mentioned most often were calcium, magnesium and B6. In general it can't hurt to take these supplements and it may help.

[A Final Word](#)

I've been RLS free for about six weeks. In this article the only Promolife product I mentioned was the far infrared sauna. That isn't because other products we sell weren't mentioned during my research, but because I had tried them and they didn't work for me. We take a lot of pride in these newsletters and want to be as truthful as possible. Getting you to buy as many products as we can link to a subject is not our method of doing business. For this reason if you do suffer from RLS I hope you will try the various techniques mentioned.



Article written by Cat Pippin Lowe for Promolife, Inc.