

TITLE 1: “Ask the Doctors”

TITLE 2:

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KEYWORDS:

- Symptoms
- Pharmaceutical treatment
- Non-pharmaceutical treatment

ABSTRACT OVERVIEW: Charles Adler discusses pharmaceutical treatments with a patient who is severely struggling with RLS symptoms.

COPY OF ARTICLE:

Q.When sitting or lying down,I’m tortured by involuntary leg jerks. I’m taking Tegretol, this being the only antiseizure medication I can tolerate and is effective and that is also accepted by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Could Tegretol be causing the leg movements? I’d also like to know if RLS or PLMD can cause unrelenting pain. I’ve had x-rays and an MRI—the hip appears to be perfectly normal. Physical therapy, massage, exercises, ice, heat chiropractor, and

injections of cortisone have all been tried to no avail.



A. Motor restlessness involving the sense of a need to move the legs and actual increase in leg movements is what gives the disorder the name *restless legs syndrome*. Although many, if not most, people with RLS are most troubled by the sensory symptoms and the compelling urge to move the legs, a minority are most bothered by the actual movements, particularly the involuntary ones that occur during both waking and sleep. Regarding the use of Tegretol, the first issue is whether you had the leg movements prior to starting the Tegretol, and then if the leg movements worsened on the Tegretol. It is very unlikely that Tegretol alone would cause the involuntary leg movements.

The only way to determine if Tegretol is causing the leg movements would be to have your doctor consider taking you off the medication, although you might need to temporarily stop driving. RLS can be associated with pain that can be quite intense. Sometimes a special nerve study can help determine if there is any nerve damage causing the pain. In any event, I’d recommend talking with your doctor about trying various RLS medications, such as pergolide (Permax), pramipexole (Mirapex), carbidopa/levodopa (Sinemet), gabapentin (Neurontin), or other drugs to see if the pain subsides.

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