

**TITLE 1:** "Ask the Doctors"

**TITLE 2:**

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- Pharmaceutical treatment

**ABSTRACT OVERVIEW:** Dr. Buchfuhrer discusses with one reader how trauma, which caused his back pain, could have been the reason for his RLS flair-up. Special attention is paid to the drug prednisone as well.

**COPY OF ARTICLE:**

*Q. I have RLS that has not responded to the usual treatments. Some time ago my doctor treated my severely aching back with prednisone. Not only did my backache subside, but the RLS stopped. However, after the treatment, the RLS gradually returned. Has prednisone been tested for RLS treatment?*

A. I do not know of anyone who has looked into using prednisone for treating RLS, nor are there any articles in the medical literature (MEDLINE search) that discuss this topic. It is known that trauma to the body, especially to the back, can provoke RLS, or even be the initial trigger of RLS. Unfortunately, even after the back pain subsides many are left with their RLS problems unchanged. I have seen some RLS sufferers who have noted improvement or even total remission of their RLS after their back pain resolved, but these lucky ones are in the minority. This is the likely explanation for your RLS remission. It is therefore much more likely that prednisone did not affect the RLS directly, but rather indirectly by helping your back pain, which was the real trigger of your tough-to-treat RLS. It is very common for RLS to wax and wane, although over time it generally gets slowly worse. The worsening of your RLS symptoms after treatment with prednisone may just be part of that natural process. If your back pain (or other inflammatory type pain) returned after prednisone was stopped, that could also explain the return of your RLS.

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