

TITLE 1: "Ask the Doctor"

TITLE 2:

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KEYWORDS:

- Genetics
- Non-pharmaceutical treatment

ABSTRACT OVERVIEW: A question from a reader with a B12 deficiency regarding the relationship between pernicious anemia and RLS.

COPY OF ARTICLE:

Ask the Doctor

Q. *I have a family history of pernicious anemia and probably of RLS. For many years I gave my mother B12 injections because she was diagnosed with pernicious anemia. My maternal*



grandfather died of pernicious anemia before a treatment had been found. My mother, although never diagnosed, almost certainly had RLS. With this history of B12 deficiency, I have often wondered if there is a relationship between pernicious anemia and my own severe RLS. Would it make sense to have a trial course of parenteral B12 to see if it would help to alleviate the severe RLS symptoms that I experience?

A. Because vitamin B12 is important in maintaining normal nerve function in both the peripheral and central nervous system, I would not be surprised that vitamin B12 deficiency was at least associated with aggravation of RLS. There is some increased risk of RLS with peripheral nerve damage; therefore, to the degree that vitamin B12 deficiency causes nerve damage, it might be expected to increase the risk of RLS. However there are no studies

specifically tying vitamin B12 deficiencies to RLS. All patients with vitamin B12 deficiency should be on treatment with vitamin B12 supplements and that should be the case whether you have RLS or not. To see if you have vitamin B12 deficiency, you can have your blood levels checked by your family doctor.

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