

Restless Leg Syndrome & Vein Disease. What's the link?

mansfieldmagazine.com/2013/07/09/9235/restless-leg-syndrome-vein-disease-whats-the-link

By Dr. Gordon F. Gibbs of Trinity Vein Institute

Recently, Dr. Gibbs sat down with Dr. Eidson to discuss Restless Leg Syndrome, or RLS, and how screening for vein disease can eliminate restless leg symptoms:

Q: Dr. Eidson, for those not familiar with RLS, can you please provide us with an overview?

Dr. Eidson: “Certainly. RLS is considered a disruptive neurologic disorder. It affects 15 percent or more of the population. Those who suffer from RLS will feel a strong, often irresistible urge to move their legs, usually accompanied by uncomfortable sensations — described as crawling, creeping, cramping, tingling, pulling, tugging or itching. Symptoms are usually worse at night or when those affected are sitting or lying down. RLS can also cause intermittent movements while sleeping, which makes falling and staying asleep difficult. In severe cases, it can mean chronic sleep deprivation with psychological and cognitive deficits.”

Q: Is RLS a treatable condition?

Dr. Eidson: “Yes. While symptoms of RLS are partially or temporarily relieved by activity, such as walking or stretching, the typical treatment for RLS involves long-term use of prescription medication. Keep in mind though that these prescriptions can produce unwanted side effects and increased costs, often with suboptimal effectiveness. However, there may be another cause for RLS that is often discussed or diagnosed — [vein disease](#).”

Q: What is vein disease and how common is it in those with RLS?

Dr. Eidson: “About 40 percent of people with RLS have problems with their veins. Vein disease is called chronic venous insufficiency (CVI) or venous reflux disease. Typically, the one-way valves in affected individuals’ leg veins become leaky, resulting in inefficient blood flow from the legs back to the heart. In addition to RLS, people with vein disease also can have [other leg symptoms](#), such as:

- Aching
- Heaviness
- Cramping
- Bulging veins
- Spider veins
- Darkening of the skin, ulcers and sores



While the exact mechanism for the relationship between restless legs syndrome and vein disease is not well understood, many doctors have discovered that treating the vein disease of people with RLS is extremely effective.”

Q: So, would you suggest those suffering from RLS be [screened for vein disease](#)?

Dr. Eidson: “Absolutely. One study has demonstrated that treatment of diseased veins initially eliminated or significantly reduced 98 percent of a person’s restless leg symptoms. It also found that 92 percent of symptoms did not return after one year. Another study showed that 95 percent of an individual’s restless legs symptoms were reduced, and 53 percent of symptoms were completely eliminated after treatment of their diseased veins. These study findings suggest that the evaluation of RLS should include an evaluation for possible vein disease. As many as 40 percent of people could have a single procedure to eliminate RLS symptoms without the risk or cost of lifelong medications. So, if you or someone you know has RLS, consider having a screen for vein disease. [Rocky Mountain Vein Institute](#) offers free ultrasound screenings as well as free consultations with a board certified team of doctors and health care providers who specialize in the management of vein disease.

About Dr. Gordon F. Gibbs

The founder and chief medical officer of Trinity Vein Institute and Rocky Mountain Vein Institute, Dr. Gordon F. Gibbs is a Mayo Clinic trained interventional radiologist board certified in phlebology, diagnostic radiology and fellowship trained in vascular/interventional radiology. He is an active member of the American College of Phlebology and The Society of Interventional Radiology. Dr. Gibbs is also Medical Director of Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology at St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center in Pueblo, Colorado. For more information, please visit <http://www.trinityvein.com/>, send an email to info@trinityvein.com or call 888.730.VEIN (8346).

