

Have restless legs syndrome during pregnancy? It may reappear later on

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Women with transient restless legs syndrome (RLS) during pregnancy appear to be at a higher risk of developing a chronic form of RLS later in life or have the same symptoms during future pregnancies, according to new research published in the December 7, 2010, print issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. RLS is a sleep-related motor disorder that causes an unpleasant feeling in the legs. The condition generally worsens during rest at night and improves with movement. Symptoms tend to progress with age.

"This is the first long-term study to look at a possible connection between [restless legs syndrome](#) in [pregnancy](#) and repeat occurrences in later years or future pregnancies," said study author Mauro Manconi, MD, PhD, with Vita-Salute University in Milan, Italy. "Most of the time, when a woman experiences RLS in pregnancy, it disappears after the baby is born. However, our results show that having the condition during pregnancy is a significant risk factor for a future chronic form or the short-term form in other pregnancies down the road."

The study involved 74 women who experienced restless legs syndrome during pregnancy and 133 who did not. After six and half years, the women were interviewed about RLS symptoms, further pregnancy, occurrences of other diseases and any medications they used.

A total of 18 of the women who had RLS during pregnancy, or 24 percent, also had the disorder at the end of the study, compared to 10 of the women who did not have RLS during pregnancy, or 8 percent. Thus, women who experienced RLS in their pregnancy were four times more likely to have the condition again than those who did not experience pregnancy-related RLS. They were also three times more likely to have the chronic form compared to women who did not experience pregnancy-related RLS. About 60 percent of the

women who experienced RLS during pregnancy reported the symptoms again in a future pregnancy, compared to 3 percent of the women who did not have RLS during a first pregnancy but developed it during a future pregnancy, a relative risk of 19.4.

"[Women](#) who experience RLS should still be reassured that symptoms will probably disappear after delivery but may reappear later on," said Manconi.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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