

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Many things can cause restless leg syndrome

DEAR DR. ROACH: Don't forget that although there are many medical

ANSWER: Thank you for writing. Many people also have written about other causes and treatments for restless leg syndrome, so I wanted to talk a bit more about this important subject.

In addition to the iron deficiency I mentioned and the varicose veins Dr. Sandman writes about, there are several other important causes, including kidney disease, usually when dialysis has started. Diabetics have a higher risk for RLS, which sometimes can be mistaken for diabetic neuropathy.

tion on this common sleep disorder, and also offers advice on nighttime cramps. Readers can obtain a copy by writing: Dr. Roach - No. 306W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6 Can. with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

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DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 92 and have spinal stenosis in my lower back and neck. The neck stenosis is causing a balance problem. Who would treat and/or operate on this - orthopedist or neurologist? — J.W. ANSWER: I would be very slow to recommend surgery on the neck at age 92. I would try other treatments, including medication, physical therapy and possibly injection, before considering surgery. Balance problems may benefit from problem-specific exercises. A neurologist may be very helpful in evaluating whether the symptoms are indeed coming from the spinal stenosis, because balance problems can have many different causes. If symptoms were intolerable despite everything that could be done short of surgery, I would find the most experienced surgeon around, which could be either a neurosurgeon or an orthopedic surgeon.



causes of restless leg syndrome, varicose veins also can be a source of symptoms, and we have cured many people of symptoms with minimally invasive varicose vein treatments.

We always recommend that if you have visible varicosities or strong family history of varicose veins, you should get an ultrasound to determine if you have venous insufficiency. The treatments have essentially no down time and can mean one less medication for many people. In addition, just because you can't see visible varicosities does not mean you do not have venous insufficiency. We have patients with beautiful legs whose ultrasound reveals large veins under the surface. - Melissa A. Sandman, M.D.

Multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease both are associated with RLS, and Parkinson's is important because medicines when such as levodopa/carbidopa (Sinemet) wear off, it can mimic RLS symptoms. When dopa drugs are used long-term for RLS, symptoms can get worse, a condition called augmentation.

Pregnant women are more likely to have RLS. Many drugs, especially antidepressants, can cause RLS. I had a reader tell me that hers was due to Benadryl she was taking for sleep. Magnesium deficiency is common in RLS, and several readers told me magnesium supplements stopped their symptoms.

The booklet on restless leg syndrome provides much more informa-

SALOME'S STARS

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Use that Arian charm to help make a difficult workplace transition easier for everyone. News about a long-awaited decision can be confusing. Don't jump to conclusions.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Although you might well be tempted to be more extravagant than you should be at this time, I'm betting you'll let your sensible Bovine instinct guide you toward moderation.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) An opportunity for travel could come with some problems regarding travel companions and other matters. So be sure you read all the fine print before you start packing.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Make an effort to complete your usual workplace tasks before volunteering for extra duty. Scrambling to catch up later on could create some resentment among your colleagues.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A financial matter could have you rethinking your current spending plans. You might want to recheck your budget to see where you can cut back on expenses until the situation improves.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) One way to make your case for that promotion you've been hoping for might be to put your planning skills to work in helping to shape up a project that got out of hand. Good luck.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Be careful about "experts" who have no solid business background. Instead, seek advice on enhancing your business prospects from bona fide sources with good success records.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Standing up to support a colleague's viewpoint — even if it's unpopular — can be difficult if you feel outnumbered. But you'll win plaudits for your honesty and courage.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) While progress continues on resolving that recurring problem, you might feel it's taking too long. But these things always need to develop at their own pace. Be patient.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Someone close to you might have a financial problem and seek your advice. If you do decide to get involved, insist on seeing everything that might be relevant to this situation.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) A personal matter takes an interesting turn. The question is, do you want to follow the new path or take time out to reconsider the change? Think this through before deciding.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Moving into a new career is a big step. Check that offer carefully with someone who has been there, done that, and has the facts you'll need to help you make your decision.

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