



## What are Periodic Limb Movement Disorder (PLMD)?

Periodic limb movement disorder (PLMD), is a condition in which a person's legs or arms twitch, cramp or move involuntarily and periodically during sleep. Previously, PLMD was referred to as nocturnal myoclonus - rapid, **rhythmic contractions of the muscles** often seen in seizures. However, PLMD is not myoclonus.

The movements encountered in PLMD are repetitive and rhythmic and typically occur every 20 to 40 seconds. These **movements may sometimes occur five or more times in one hour**, or on and off throughout the night during periods of non-REM sleep. Because the movements disrupt sleep and often lead to daytime sleepiness, PLMD is considered a [sleep disorder](#). Usually, partial flexing of the big toe, knee, ankle and sometimes the hip are affected by these rhythmic episodes.

It is often associated with [restless leg syndrome](#), but they are both different. Restless leg syndrome is a condition characterized by unpleasant sensations in the legs (and sometimes arms) while awake, and an **uncontrollable urge to move them for relief**. Most people with restless leg syndrome suffer from PLMD. However, those with PLMD do not suffer from restless leg syndrome. As PLMD causes you to be very tired during the day, it can have a detrimental effect on your health and well-being, leading to [depression](#), [bad memory](#), short attention span and [fatigue](#). PLMD is more common amongst middle-aged and older people but can occur at any age.

## Diagnosing Periodic Limb Movement Disorder (PLMD)

Your doctor will perform a thorough physical examination and medical history to ascertain the diagnosis of PLMD. It is helpful if you can provide a **sleep diary detailing your sleep patterns**. An Epworth Sleepiness scale will also be able to rate your sleep and show how it affects your daily life.

An overnight sleep study called a polysomnogram at a sleep center may have to be performed. This test charts your brain waves, heart beat, breathing, and also **records your leg and arm movements**. It is also useful in detecting any other sleeping disorders.

## Symptoms

Most people with PLMD are not aware of their leg movements and will report the

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following symptoms:

- Difficulty in falling asleep
- Difficulty in staying asleep
- Difficulty in staying awake during the day
- Restless sleep
- Hot or cold feet
- Loss of hair on the legs (men)

Very often, the sleep of a bed partner is affected by leg movements involving one or both limbs. These symptoms may include:

- Knee, ankle and big toe joints bend as part of the movements
- Movements vary from slight to wild kicking and thrashing
- Movements are rhythmic and repetitive, occurring every 20 to 40 seconds
- Movements last for about 2 seconds

## What Causes Periodic Limb Movement Disorder (PLMD)?

The cause of PLMD is unknown, although there are **numerous factors that may influence this disorder.**

PLMD is commonly found in people with the following sleeping disorders:

- [Restless Leg Syndrome \(RLS\)](#)
- REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD)
- [Narcolepsy](#)

## Underlying conditions that contribute to PLMD

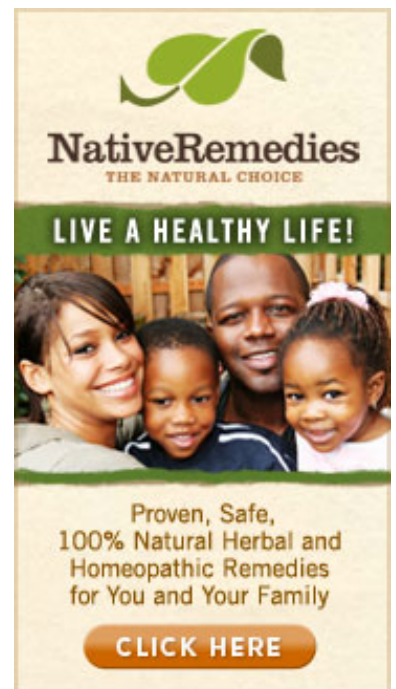
Underlying medical conditions that contribute to PLMD include:

- Spinal cord injury
- Multiple system atrophy – a neurological disorder
- Sleep-related eating disorder (SRED)
- Low brain iron
- [Poor circulation](#)
- Metabolic disorders
- Kidney disease
- [Rheumatoid arthritis](#)
- Pregnancy

## Medications that may cause and exacerbate PLMD

Certain medications may also cause and exacerbate PLMD:

- Some antidepressants
- Lithium
- Anti-nausea medication



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

# Help for Periodic Limb Movement Disorder (PLMD)

The first step to treating any sleeping disorder is to **determine whether there are any underlying causes** such as anemia, [diabetes](#) or the use of certain antidepressants. Because PLMD is commonly associated with restless leg syndrome, the same medications are used. To date, the most effective medication for PLMD is also used to treat [Parkinson's disease](#). Sleeping tablets, some anti-seizure medication and narcotic pain killers may also be prescribed.

## Natural Remedies

Natural and holistic treatments are also extremely effective in promoting calm, rested limbs during sleep and **reducing the symptoms of related sleep disorders**. Treatments such as herbal and homeopathic remedies consist of entirely natural ingredients to deliver powerful results. Herbs such as Astragalus membranaceus improves functioning of all the body's organ systems and boosts circulation.

Aesculus hippocastum (Horse Chestnut) can relieve Periodic Limb Movement and RLS by keeping the blood flowing smoothly even during rest and sleep. Ruscus aculeatus (Butcher's Broom) relieves pain and discomfort and is useful in the treatment of [constipation](#), [water retention](#), [haemorrhoids](#) and [varicose veins](#). In addition, to ensure a quality, restful sleep use herbs such as Hypericum perforatum and Schizandra chinensis. Vitamin supplements such as Calcium lactate, Magnesium lactate and Vitamin B6 can also help to **maintain regular sleep patterns**.

## Some tips to cope with PLMD

In order to manage the symptoms of PLMD, it may be helpful to improve your sleep hygiene. Follow these tips for a better night's rest:

- Establish a regular bedtime and wake time schedule
- Reduce your intake of caffeine
- Avoid drinking alcohol before bedtime
- Drink less fluids before going to sleep
- Avoid eating heavy meals before bedtime
- Stop smoking, because the nicotine affects your natural sleep cycles
- Exercise regularly, but preferably during the daytime (before noon)
- Practice relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation and deep breathing exercises
- Massage the affected area to relieve any discomfort
- Soak in hot bath to relax your muscles and ease tension before bedtime
- Keep a sleep diary to monitor your sleeping patterns

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed

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according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic



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medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

## **Related Natural Remedies:**

**LegCalm:** Supports circulation and comfort to the legs and limbs to maintain still rested legs at night.

LegCalm is a 100% safe and effective natural remedy for **supporting health and circulation in the legs** and limbs and maintaining healthy sleep patterns naturally.

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## **herbal & homeopathic remedies:**

1) All Native Remedies products are manufactured according to the highest pharmaceutical standards - using only the best quality raw ingredients from nature's medicine chest.

2) Native Remedies and our suppliers are registered with the FDA as accredited suppliers and manufacturers of health supplements. Our products are sold all over the world and are manufactured to strict international standards in a GMP accredited manufacturing plant.

3) All our remedies are manufactured in an FDA registered pharmaceutical facility under close supervision.

This includes formulation, acquiring and testing of raw ingredients as well as final manufacturing. This gives us the confidence to say that when you are buying a Native Remedies product, you are buying the safest and the best! We know what goes into our remedies - which is why we know what you will get out of them!

4) Manufacturing is done strictly according to the principles of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) and all raw ingredients undergo stringent testing before being approved by our registered manufacturing pharmacists.

5) We offer a free email [Ask Our Experts](#) service run by trained consultants ready to advise you on the best choice for your health.

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