

Here are this week's health care news highlights from AskaPatient:

- Drug makers lose bid to delay trial over multi-billion dollar lawsuit accusing them of fuelling opioid abuse. <http://ow.ly/celu30nZuOs> (03-11-19)
- One doctor suggests that for some teens with mystery pains, the best treatment may be more pain. <http://ow.ly/EZey30nZuVa> (03-11-19)
- Sometimes the liver cannot heal itself after liver surgery, but one protein in the blood may be the key. <http://ow.ly/vV7I30nZuZ7> (03-11-19)
- Rural hospitals, the only lifeline for quick treatment for many, are shutting down at an alarming rate. <http://ow.ly/Q6aE30nZv65> (03-12-19)
- Sepsis is a leading cause of death in hospitals, but a recent study concludes most cases are not preventable. <http://ow.ly/TOD730o0vZn> (03-12-19)
- Building a moderate amount of muscle strength reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, independent of cardiovascular fitness. <http://ow.ly/1Plz30o0w11> (03-12-19)
- Young athletes may have a higher risk of sleep disordered breathing, leading to a greater potential for heart abnormalities. <http://ow.ly/L9wf30o0w1D> (03-13-19)
- Eating mushrooms could help stave off mild cognitive impairment, according to a study on Chinese seniors. <http://ow.ly/2nVz30o1ogS> (03-13-19)
- Are our intensive care units too clean? New findings suggest excessive hygiene is driving antibiotic resistance. <http://ow.ly/LCqJ30o1ovY> (03-13-19)
- National Cancer Institute director to step in as acting FDA chief after Gottlieb's sudden resignation announcement. <http://ow.ly/WBmy30o1oyC> (03-14-19)
- FDA holds a vast repository of reports for medical device malfunctions that is hidden from the public and even doctors. <http://ow.ly/R2xg30o2gft> (03-14-19)
- Lavender oil is shown to relieve symptoms of mild anxiety when taken orally. <http://ow.ly/lwSD30o2gji> (03-14-19)
- Schools in Italy are turning children away if they are unable to prove their vaccinations are up-to-date. <http://ow.ly/NCwN30o2gn0> (03-15-19)
- Protocol at Johns Hopkins boosts bone marrow transplant success to nearly 100 percent from only half-matched donors. <http://ow.ly/VWs530o37Mg> (03-15-19)
- New imaging technique can detect cancers in lymph nodes before they begin spreading to other organs. <http://ow.ly/NV4S30o37Pg> (03-15-19)
- More than a hundred people potentially exposed to the plague after veterinarians struggled to diagnose a sick dog. <http://ow.ly/4gTn30o3XOA> (03-16-19)
- University of Cincinnati lab develops sensor that continuously monitors sweat for the same information that blood gives. <http://ow.ly/f1OT30o3Y2V> (03-16-19)
- Treating mice with a unique combination of light and sound induces brain waves that improve Alzheimer's symptoms. <http://ow.ly/aKL30o3Ybj> (03-16-19)

Drug-Induced Restless Legs Syndrome

It is well-known that long-term use of anti-psychotic drugs can trigger a side effect called "tardive dyskinesia," a movement disorder characterized by twitching or uncontrolled movements in the head, neck, and face, and limbs. (See our article on this topic, referenced below.)

Recently, however, a very common neurological disorder affecting around ten percent of the population, "Restless Legs Syndrome," or RLS, has also been linked to antipsychotics as well as to antidepressants and antihistamines. Public Citizen's Health Research Group's *Worst Pills March* issue examined the phenomenon of drug-induced restless legs syndrome, and gave advice on what patients should consider when thinking about whether the condition is just an annoyance or needs to be treated.

What is RLS?

"Restless legs syndrome (RLS) causes a powerful urge to move your legs. Your legs become uncomfortable when you are lying down or sitting. Some people describe it as a creeping, crawling, tingling, or burning sensation. Moving makes your legs feel better, but not for long. RLS can make it hard to fall asleep and stay asleep." (from *Medline Plus*)

Not all leg-related movement disorders are classified as RLS. For example, a movement disorder that only occurs **during** sleep is called "**periodic limb movement disorder**" (PLMD). The sleeper's leg or legs move rhythmically with a kick or a jerk every 40 to 60 seconds during the first phase of sleep. Because the person with PLMD isn't aware of the kicking, the condition is often first observed by a bed partner. The bed partner, incidentally, may also suffer from sleep issues as a result of being kept awake by the "kicky" sleeper. RLS sufferers may also have PLMD, but many people have PLMD without having RLS.

For both kinds of leg movement disorders, older adults are affected more often, and the condition may only happen occasionally. Diet changes, such as avoiding alcohol or caffeine near bedtime, can alleviate the problem. Iron deficiencies and pregnancy can also temporarily trigger RLS.

Drug-induced RLS

Drugs that may cause or worsen RLS include antipsychotics, some antidepressants, antiepileptic (seizure drugs), over-the-counter and prescription antihistamines, and nausea drugs. When RLS is severe and needs treatment, **and is caused by a medication**, the course of treatment decision is difficult.

If you think your drug may be causing or worsening your RLS, *Worst Pills* recommends first asking your doctor if you can try discontinuing the suspected drug completely or at least reduce the dosage of the drug. In addition, you can try modifying your diet or sleep habits to try to lessen the RLS symptoms.

Because there is no drug approved for drug-induced RLS, any Rx received for that purpose (such as Horizant, an extended release gabapentin, or Mirapex, a dopamine agonist) would be considered to be "off-label" and come with its own set of side effects risks.

Here are some examples of drugs that may trigger restless legs syndrome, along with links to patient experiences of RLS:

Examples of Drugs That May Cause Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)

Drug	Type of Drug
Benadryl	Antihistamine
Risperdal	Antipsychotic
Reglan*	Migraine/Nausea
Seroquel	Antipsychotic
Zyprexa	Antipsychotic
Lexapro	Antidepressant
Lamictal	Anticonvulsant
Cymbalta	Antidepressant
Latuda	Antipsychotic

Click drug name above to link to patient experiences of RLS.

*Reglan (METOCLOPRAMIDE HYDROCHLORIDE) has FDA black box warning about risk of tardive dyskinesia

There are many more examples in addition to those listed above. From the AskaPatient web site, search for your drug, then click "filter results" and type "RLS restless legs" and check the box "any word" to find out if your drug has patient experience reports for the side effect.

Sources and more reading on this topic:

- "Restless Legs" article on National Library of Medicine's [Medline Plus](#)
- "Movement disorder side effects of antipsychotic drugs" article from AskaPatient November 2017. Includes chart of drugs with links to patient examples of movement disorders caused by antipsychotics like Seroquel, nausea drug Reglan, and a few common antidepressants. [AskaPatient article](#)
- "Drug-induced Restless Legs Syndrome" March 2019. *Worst Pills, Best Pills* newsletter. (membership required to view) [WorstPills.org](#)
- "Sleep Related Movement Disorders" a collection of short articles on the topic, including periodic limb movement disorder. [Science Direct](#)

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