

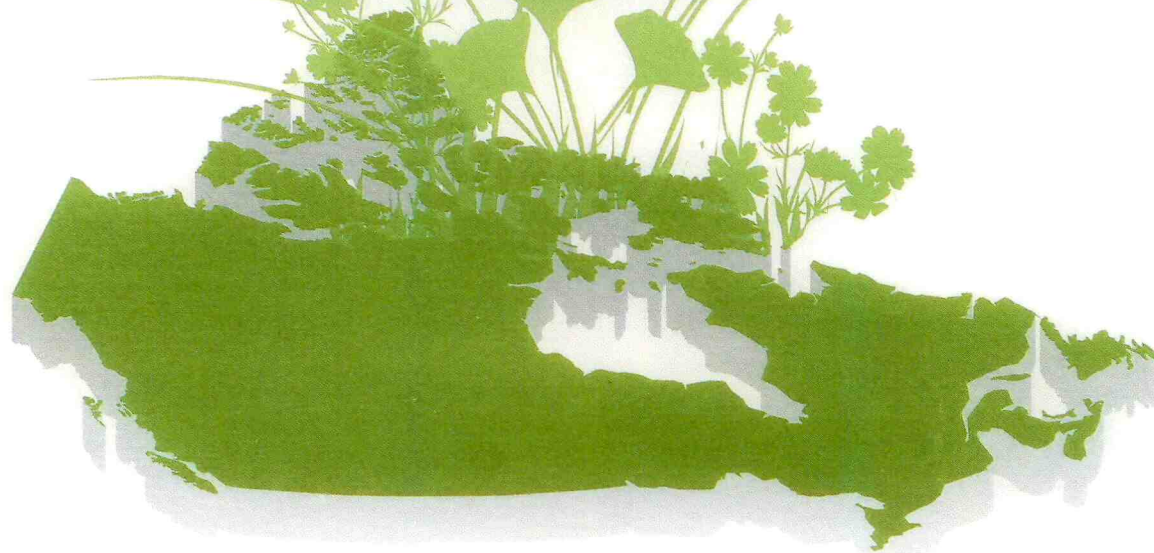
✚ Canada's dirty WATER TREATMENT SECRETS

alive

CANADA'S NATURAL HEALTH
AND WELLNESS MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2008

THE POLITICS OF NATURAL HEALTH



SPOTLIGHT ON
DIABETES

CANADIAN NATURAL
HEALTH RETAILERS SUPPORT
vitamin angels

BLACK GOLD
the tar sands blight

Banffshire Club

- cinderella pumpkin soup
- date and pecan venison
- caramelized pear phyllo

ALLERGY OR SENSITIVITY?

Professionals answer your questions about natural medicine

RESTLESS LEGS

CATARACT OPTIONS

THE SALT SOLUTION



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Joanne Carr, RHN, has 12 years' experience as a registered holistic nutritionist. She has lectured at natural health product seminars across Canada and also contributes to various health publications.

Q | *For the past several months I've been suffering with severe leg cramps, mostly at night but sometimes during the day. They prevent me from having a good night's sleep. What can I do to stop them?*



A **Serenity Aberdour, ND:** It sounds as though you may suffer from restless leg syndrome (RLS), characterized by an uncomfortable feeling in the legs (such as cramping or aching) and an irresistible urge to move the legs. Movement provides temporary relief, and symptoms are generally worse at night. Many people also have symptoms during the day, which worsen with prolonged sitting or standing still.

About half of RLS sufferers have a family member with RLS, suggesting that genes play a role in at least some cases. Other research has linked RLS to various chronic diseases, nutrient deficiencies, and/or neurotransmitter imbalances. The key to finding relief is finding and treating the underlying factor(s) involved in each case. Consider the following:

- **Iron deficiency:** Some RLS sufferers have low iron levels and pumping up dietary and supplemental iron intake may help.
- **Magnesium:** Many sufferers report improvement in their RLS symptoms with use of supplemental magnesium. I have seen this particularly in cases of RLS that arise during pregnancy. Oral magnesium supplementation can be helpful

in these cases; intravenous magnesium therapy may be helpful in other cases.

- **Dopamine:** Various movement disorders, including RLS, are believed to be related to levels or function of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps to regulate our body movements. Drugs that increase availability of dopamine can help to reduce RLS symptoms and are considered a first line of treatment when prescription drugs are used. On the other hand, disorders or drugs that interfere with dopamine levels should also be investigated when determining the cause of RLS symptoms.
- **Chronic disease:** RLS symptoms have been reported in a number of chronic diseases, including liver or kidney disease, multiple sclerosis, and diabetes. Treating the underlying illness can help to improve overall symptoms, including RLS symptoms.
- **Stimulants:** Caffeine from all sources, tobacco, and other substances that affect the sympathetic nervous system can aggravate RLS.

Determining the underlying cause of your restless legs will improve your chances of finding the most appropriate treatment for relief from your symptoms. >

