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ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER AUGUST 2007

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QUESTION:

For the last six months my husband has been complaining about waking up at night from his legs aching. He says it's happening because he works out at the gym too much, he walks too much during the day, or he is just getting older. I think he should see his doctor about it. He says I am overly concerned. What should I do?

ANSWER:

I think you have given your husband good advice and he would be wise to consult his physician. There is a condition, Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS), which is in an irresistible urge to move one's legs due to unusual or unpleasant sensations in the legs. Often described as creeping, tugging, or pulling, since RLS usually occurs in the evening, it can severely disrupt sleep. RLS often runs in families, but it can also appear as the result of another condition.

Some of the symptoms associated with RLS include a strong urge to move your legs, which aren't resisted; the urge to move your legs diminishes as long as you continue to move your legs; or the urge becomes worse when you are resting and is usually worse in the evening, especially when you are resting. Perhaps telling your husband about this condition will encourage him to consult his physician.

Let your husband know that RLS affects less than 10% of the population and he could put your mind at rest by sharing his concerns with his physician. A consultation with his physician should include a review of his medical history, a thorough physical exam and a complete description of his symptoms.

For more information regarding RLS, you can contact the Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation at (877) 463-6757 or email www.rls.org. The Foundation provides the latest information about support groups, publications about RLS, a searchable healthcare provider directory and much more.

Questions or comments call Karen Wiener, MA, MFT, Manager of Social Services at (888) 994-3863, ext. 2390

IRON — TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE*

Today iron deficiency is getting a lot of attention. It is the most common known form of nutritional deficiency. Iron has several vital functions as a carrier of oxygen in the human body. When there is too little iron in the body, oxygen is not efficiently transported to tissues and organs. An inadequate amount of iron in the body can bring about the symptoms of an iron deficiency, which include fatigue, shortness of breath, pale skin, concentration problems, dizziness, a weakened immune system and energy loss.

Iron supplementation is often necessary if serious health consequences develop from an iron deficiency. However, be aware that even a small amount of excess iron can damage the heart, brain and other storage sites in the body. The iron you absorb is not excreted from your body. You lose iron through hair, fingernails, skin cells and the loss of blood. Thus, a mild iron deficiency can often be corrected, and prevented, by eating iron-rich foods. Consuming too much iron or too little iron can cause ill-health.

Consult your physician if you have concerns about an iron deficiency. There are a number of tests your physician can order to determine your iron level. For more information regarding an iron deficiency, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov and the Vitamin & Nutrition center at www.vitamins-nutrition.org.

*A big thanks to Lewis Bennett of California for bringing this topic to our attention. Lewis is one of our many supporters.

MOVING SPECIALISTS FOR SENIORS

Founded in 2002, The National Association of Senior Move Managers (NASMM) is a non-profit, professional association dedicated to helping seniors and their families with the physical and emotional aspects of moving. Many Senior Move Managers have backgrounds in gerontology, social work, health care, nursing and psychology. All share a commitment to make transition and relocation as positive as possible for seniors and their families. To learn more about this service or to locate a Senior Move Manager in your area, visit NASMM at www.nasmm.com.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“It’s great to be great, but it’s greater to be human.”

— *Will Rogers*

Correction: Volume 2, Issue 5, May 2007, the correct phone number for the Do Not Call Registry is (888) 382-1222.

**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS CALL
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(888) 994-3863, EXT. 2390**