RLS Medicine Check: Signs of Augmentation

For anyone taking pramipexole (Mirapex), ropinirole (Requip) or the rotigotine patch (Neupro) for restless legs syndrome (RLS)

WHAT AUGMENTATION IS

These medicines, called dopamine agonists, often work very well at first. With daily use over months to years, some people develop **augmentation**: each dose still brings relief, but the RLS underneath gets worse. In one long-term study, about 7 in 100 people taking pramipexole developed it each year, and the risk kept adding up over time. Higher doses and low iron make it more likely.

DO ANY OF THESE SOUND LIKE YOU?

- ☐ Symptoms start earlier in the day than they used to, such as the afternoon instead of the evening.
- ☐ Symptoms come on faster when you sit or lie down.
- ☐ Symptoms have spread to your arms or body.
- ☐ Each dose wears off sooner than it did.
- ☐ The urge to move is stronger than before.
- ☐ You have needed the dose raised more than once.

COMPARE THEN AND NOW

	When I started the medicine	Now
Time of day symptoms usually start		
Minutes of sitting before symptoms start		
Body parts affected		
Hours one dose lasts		
Medicine and dose		

IF YOU CHECKED ANY BOX

- **Do not raise the dose on your own.** A higher dose brings short-term relief but tends to make augmentation worse.
- **Do not stop the medicine on your own.** Stopping suddenly causes a strong rebound of symptoms.
- **Bring this sheet to a visit**, ideally with a sleep specialist.

What we usually do: check iron and treat it if low; look for things that worsen RLS, such as antihistamines (diphenhydramine and similar), some antidepressants, alcohol and untreated sleep apnea; start an alpha-2-delta medicine (gabapentin, gabapentin enacarbil or pregabalin); then taper the dopamine agonist slowly over weeks to months. Expect a temporary rough patch during the taper. Most people come through it with better long-term control.

Also tell your prescriber promptly about new urges to gamble, shop, eat or have sex that feel out of character (they affect roughly 6 to 17 in 100 people taking these medicines), and sudden sleepiness during the day, especially while driving.

Doing well on a low, steady dose with none of these signs? This is not an emergency. Review the plan at your next visit.

Notes for my visit

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Visit date: _____ Questions? Call: _____

Scan for the full guide and a 7-minute video

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