

Renee

Restless nights

Renee is six months pregnant and excited for the birth of her first child. She has been feeling good over the past few weeks and is working hard to get things done around the house while she still has energy.

As her pregnancy progresses, Renee notices that it's getting harder to fall asleep at night. She has a strange feeling in her legs – it feels like bugs are crawling on her. These strange feelings continue for a couple weeks, always happening when she is trying to relax in the evening or while trying to fall asleep. She has noticed that if she moves her legs, the feeling goes away – but it comes back once she stops moving. Renee has started to get anxious in the evening anticipating the strange sensations.

At her next pre-natal appointment, Renee mentions the strange feeling to her doctor. To her surprise, her doctor says it sounds like she may be experiencing restless legs syndrome (RLS), a condition that is seen in one in five pregnant women. Although RLS can be present at any stage of pregnancy – and even in those that are not pregnant – RLS is more common in the later stages of pregnancy.

Renee's doctor reviews her medications to see if they are contributing to her symptoms and orders a blood test to check her iron levels. The test shows that her iron level is a little low, so her doctor recommends taking an iron supplement along with vitamin C. Renee starts taking a short walk each day and does light stretching right before bed. The creepy-crawly sensations Renee was feeling become less and less intense and she can fall asleep and stay asleep more easily.

