

Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is a neurological disorder that affects one's ability to wake and sleep. People with narcolepsy have excessive, uncontrollable daytime sleepiness. They may also suddenly fall asleep at any time, during any type of activity. Patients with narcolepsy can not stay awake for long periods of time, which is problematic in most school and work.



Type 1

Narcolepsy comes with a sudden loss of muscle tone that causes weakness and makes you unable to control your muscles, this condition is also known as *cataplexy*.

Type 2

It is the type of narcolepsy without *cataplexy*.

SYMPTOMS

In **REM (Rapid Eye Movement)** sleep, we can dream and have muscle paralysis, which explains the symptoms of narcolepsy. Those symptoms may include:

SLEEP PARALYSIS & DISRUPTED SLEEP

You may be **unable to move /speak while falling asleep or waking up.**

You might have a **hard time staying asleep at night** because of things like vivid dreams, breathing problems.

EXCESSIVE DAYTIME SLEEPINESS (EDS)

In general, EDS makes it **harder to do everyday activities**, even if you got enough sleep at night. The lack of energy makes it **hard to concentrate** and you may have **memory lapses and feel depressed.**

HALLUCINATIONS

These symptoms can happen at any time and are often **vivid and frightening.** They are mostly visual, but any of the other senses can be involved. If they happen as you are falling asleep, they are called **hypnagogic hallucinations.**

CATAPLEXY

This can cause problems ranging from **slurred speech to total body collapse**, depending on the muscle involved. It's often **triggered by intense emotions** such as surprise, laughter or anger.

CAUSES

Experts don't know what causes narcolepsy. They think it involves multiple things that come together to cause problems in your brain and disturb your REM sleep. Also, some experts think that narcolepsy may happen because your brain has a hard time making a chemical called hypocretin. If you have a family history of narcolepsy, your risk of getting it is 20-40 times higher.

DIAGNOSIS

- Physical exam and medical history
- Sleep records
- Polysomnogram (PSG) - This is done in a sleep disorder clinic or sleep lab. It's an overnight test that takes constant measurements while you are asleep to record problems in your sleep.
- Multiple sleep latency test (MSLT)



TREATMENT

- Lifestyle changes include
 - Stay away from caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine
 - Eat smaller meals
 - Control your sleep cycle
 - Schedule daytime naps (about 10-15 minutes)
- Follow exercise and meal schedule
- Stimulants to treat sleepiness
- Antidepressants to treat problems with REM sleep
- Sodium Oxybate (Xyrem, Xywav) to treat cataplexy
- Pitolisant / Sunosi to help you stay awake for longer periods.



REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

Ellen Sadler, sometimes called the **sleeping girl of Turville**, was a resident of Turville, a small village in Buckinghamshire in the United Kingdom.

In **1871**, aged seven, **Ellen Sadler purportedly fell asleep and didn't wake up for nine years.** This case attracted attention from newspapers, medical professionals, and the public. **No clear reason has ever been ascribed for Ellen's condition, but modern diagnoses might include narcolepsy or deliberate drugging.**

The Vagus Project
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