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Narcolepsy

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Narcolepsy Information Page](#).

Narcolepsy is a chronic neurological disorder caused by the brain's inability to regulate sleep-wake cycles. Many people with narcolepsy also experience uneven and interrupted sleep that can involve waking up frequently during the night. At various times throughout the day, people with narcolepsy experience overpowering bouts of sleep. If the urge becomes overwhelming, individuals will fall asleep for periods lasting from a few seconds to several minutes. In rare cases, some people may remain asleep for an hour or longer. In addition to excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS), people with narcolepsy experience some or all of the typical symptoms of cataplexy (the sudden loss of voluntary muscle tone), vivid hallucinations during sleep onset or upon awakening, and brief episodes of total paralysis at the beginning or end of sleep called sleep paralysis).

Because narcolepsy is often misdiagnosed as other conditions, it may take years to get the proper diagnosis. The cause of narcolepsy remains unknown. It is likely that narcolepsy involves multiple factors interacting to cause neurological dysfunction and sleep disturbances.