

# NARCOLEPSY

## SLEEP STATISTICS

Narcolepsy affects as many as **200,000** Americans, and fewer than **50,000** are diagnosed\*\*

**Eight to 12 percent** of people with narcolepsy have a close relative with the disease\*\*

Narcolepsy **affects men** slightly more than women\*\*

Approximately **20 to 25 percent** of people with narcolepsy experience all four symptoms\*\*

More than **70 million** Americans suffer from disorders of sleep and wakefulness\*\*

Of the 70 million, nearly **60 percent** have a chronic disorder\*\*

Research suggests that adults require an average of **8 to 8.5 hours** of sleep each night\*\*

Each year, sleep disorders, sleep deprivation and sleepiness add an estimated **\$15.9 billion** to the national health care bill\*\*

The International Classification of Sleep Disorders lists **84 sleep disorders** of sleep and wakefulness that serve as a guide for diagnosis

For a complete list of AASM-accredited sleep centers, visit **www.aasmnet.org** or call (888) 41-AWAKE

\*\*Statistic from the National Institutes of Health National Center for Sleep Disorder Research

Narcolepsy is a disorder of unknown origin characterized by excessive sleepiness typically associated with cataplexy and other REM-sleep phenomena, such as sleep paralysis and hypnagogic hallucinations.

Individuals suffering from narcolepsy experience non-REM and REM stages of sleep out of sequence and at random times. Additionally, some aspects of REM sleep that normally occurs only during sleep-including vivid dreams and lack of muscle tone-take place at abnormal times.

There are four classic signs of narcolepsy:

- **Excessive daytime sleepiness**  
Excessive daytime sleepiness is the main characteristic of narcolepsy. These attacks of overwhelming drowsiness and the uncontrollable need to sleep can occur unexpectedly and repeatedly in a single day.
- **Cataplexy**  
Cataplexy is the sudden loss of muscle function, ranging from weakness to collapse, in which the person remains conscious throughout the episode. The incidents can last anywhere from several seconds to several minutes.
- **Sleep paralysis**  
Less common than other signs of narcolepsy, sleep paralysis is the temporary and brief inability to move or speak while falling asleep or waking.
- **Hypnagogic hallucinations**  
Hypnagogic hallucinations are vivid, often frightening experiences that occur when a person is in the REM stage of sleep.

Practitioners at sleep centers utilize two tests to diagnose narcolepsy. A polysomnogram is a continuous recording of the electrical activity of the brain and heart, and movements of the muscles and eyes. The second, the multiple sleep latency test, measures how long it takes an individual to fall asleep and observes their sleep patterns through a series of naps. These tests may require an overnight stay at a sleep center.

Though there is no cure for narcolepsy, several treatment options are available to reduce the symptoms. Stimulants are the primary treatment to keep people awake during the day and are used for patients suffering from excessive daytime sleepiness. Antidepressants are also used to treat cataplexy, sleep paralysis and hallucinations as they suppress REM sleep. In addition to medication, lifestyle changes can help manage symptoms.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine is a professional organization dedicated to advancing sleep health care by setting clinical standards for the field; advocating for recognition, diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders; educating professionals dedicated to providing optimal sleep health care; and fostering the development and application of scientific knowledge.

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