

When you just can  
not stop falling asleep



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## When You Just Can't Stop Falling Asleep: Narcolepsy Symptoms and

Diagnosis Narcolepsy is a neurological sleep disorder caused by the brain's inability to properly coordinate the body's sleep (circadian) rhythms.

Narcoleptics fall asleep at peculiar times or they crave sleep more than what is considered normal. Narcolepsy is one of the rarest sleep disorders. The sleep patterns of narcolepsy sufferers are off base and they can crave or fall asleep at odd hours. Imagine how dangerous that would be for people using heavy machinery, driving cars, or even for mothers with young children.

Less than one percent of people suffer from narcolepsy. Which is a good thing, given how dangerous narcolepsy could be. Though narcolepsy can surface at any time it usually does not surface until at less the ages of 15 - 25. There are different triggers that will bring on narcolepsy and this determines at what age the sleep disorder will manifest itself. The cause and effects of narcolepsy are complex and even scientists are not altogether sure of why it happens. There is a theory that narcolepsy is the result of a neurotransmitter malfunction in the brain.

They believe that low levels of hypocretin is the cause. Other causes for the condition is said to be due to: \* Hormone imbalances in the brain \* Brain injury or disease \* Infection \* Genetics - up to 12 percent of sufferers have family members who are also narcoleptic Symptoms of narcolepsy The obvious one is the compelling desire to sleep. However, this need to sleep can go hand in hand with muscle weakness. Worst still, narcoleptics can suffer from hallucinations, delusions, and/or sleep paralysis. What to do if you think you have narcolepsy

The obvious answer is to see your physician for a diagnosis. Diagnostic tools used for determining narcolepsy The doctor will give you an exam, and take your medical history. The tests used are a polysomnogram which is machine (electroencepholgram (EEG) that records the brain waves patterns during REM sleep. This machine will also record eye movement (when you are in REM sleep). The next test to be done is a multiple sleep latency test. This test measures the time the patients lays down and closes their eyes to the time (sleep latency) the patients actually falls asleep.

Both these tests are painless and are done overnight in a clinical sleep lab. The tests also monitor heart rate and muscle tone while patients are awake and when they have fallen asleep. What often happens is that narcolepsy can go undiagnosed for many years; especially if the symptoms are vague, such as the desire to sleep. There is no cure for narcolepsy at present. Your doctor will discuss different treatment options available to you at this time. Sources: [http://www. better-sleep-better-life. com/what-is-narcolepsy. html](http://www.better-sleep-better-life.com/what-is-narcolepsy.html)

Natural Ways to Stay Awake Whether you're a student studying for his exams or an employee preparing a long presentation, when you have to stay awake till late nights, you'll probably have to take a cup of coffee. Staying awake naturally is just too difficult for some people. Most people have to depend on cups and cups and coffee to remain alert. But the caffeine contained in the coffee is very harmful for health as it directly affects your heart. However, most people cannot stop pouring in coffee due to their busy work schedule.

But there are some ways you can apply even to your busy schedule, so that you can remove fatigue and stay alert, without coffee or any other drugs.

The tips listed here might sound simple but they really help you to stay awake naturally. 1. Get enough sleep. The best way to stay awake when you require it is to get enough sleep when you're free. Unless you get enough sleep, you'll easily get fatigued under the stress from your work. 2. Take a light diet. If you know you've to stay awake, take a light diet in the mealtime.

Taking a heavy diet makes your digestive system do extra work thus making you tired. 3. Take deep breaths. If you feel sleepy when you're not supposed to, begin taking deep breaths. Taking in enough oxygen helps remove fatigue. 4. Light exercise. Do some light exercise each day. This keeps your body and mind active and fresh. 5. Wash your face with cold water. Every hour or so, get away from your work and wash your face with cold water. It helps refresh you. 6. Entertain yourself. Watch some funny video clips or photos. Or read some really funny jokes. This really keeps you alert. 7. Walk.

Walk around in your room, office or house, after every two hours of work or study. Doing this gives you some break plus it refreshes your mind. 8. Proper ventilation. Make sure the room you work in receives plenty of fresh air.

Open the windows, or use an air conditioner. 9. Have a conversation. Having a conversation keeps the mind alert for some hours. You could have a brief conversation with your coworker or with some friends on the phone, to keep yourself free from fatigue. 10. Drink enough water. Water helps lessen fatigue. Also, it makes sure you go to the bathroom, so you get a break. 1.

Take power naps. Take short naps lasting from 6 to 10 minutes to relieve you from fatigue. However, use a vibrating alarm clock. Also, don't nap during

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work hours. You could get into trouble. 12. Vacations. Take vacations regularly. Doing this will prevent on developing too much stress on you. These simple ways will help you stay awake naturally if you implement these into your busy schedules. While a cup of coffee may keep you awake, it's not healthy for you. Also, the above mentioned tips can keep you awake as or even more effectively as caffeine can.